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JULY 1985

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THE
wire

**MILES & DUKE
ON RECORD**

RAY CHARLES
what'd he say?

JOHN GILMORE DANIEL PONCE HERBIE NICHOLS

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DAVID CORIO

John Gilmore comes blowing in on page 14

C O N T E N T S

- 2 **NEWSWIRED**
- 5 **ON THE WIRE** Brian Morton
- 6 **AFROJAZZ** Charles De Ledesma
- 9 **LIVE WIRE**
- 14 **JOHN GILMORE** Valerie Wilmer
- 20 **HERBIE NICHOLS** Greg Murphy
- 22 **DANIEL PONCE** Sue Steward
- 25 **ON THE RECORD** Mark Webster
- 26 **RAY CHARLES** Nick Kimberley
- 31 **JAZZ IN PARIS** Jason Weiss
- 33 **COOL POOLS** Greg Murphy
- 34 **JAZZ CARTOONS** Charles Garvie
- 40 **SOUND CHECK**
- 52 **RECENT RELEASES**
- 53 **LETTERS**
- JAZZWORD** Fred Dellar

NEWS·WIRED



News

FESTIVAL FEVER GRIPS JULY JAZZ

●Pendley, Capital, Swansea, Cambridge host major events

IN ADDITION to the Jazz At The Manor festival at Pendley Manor, Herts (full details given last month), July sees several major live jazz events around the UK.

CAPITAL

AS PART of the Capital Music Festival, London sees several concerts by jazz-related figures this month – including Fats Domino (15 July), Ray Charles (16), Art Blakey/Basie Band with Joe Williams (17), MJQ/Woody Herman All Stars with Dizzy Gillespie (18), Lee Ritenour (19) and Miles Dewey Davis (20). All concerts are being held at the Royal Festival Hall.

PENDLEY

THE LINE-UP remains as we gave it last month with, in addition, Bill Watrous, George Chisholm, Don Rendell & West London Big Band (4 July); and Daniel Ponce, Simply Red, GI Brass International (5).



Dizzy blows a Capital solo

CAMBRIDGE

THE CAMBRIDGE Festival has chosen to include a full week of jazz events as part of its programme this year – including an appearance by Stan Tracey's Big Band and a newly commissioned work from pianist Gordon Beck.

● The full line-up of gigs is:

Jack Daniels Band/Cayenne (Carnival Fair, 13)
Errol Clark Trio (Don Pasquale's, 14)
Cambridge City Jazz Band (Man On The Moon, 15)
Pete Jacobsen Quintet (Man On The Moon, 16)
Peter Fraser Quartet (Man On The Moon, 17)
Gordon Beck Quintet (University Arms, 19)
Stan Tracey Big Band (Arts Theatre, 21).

ALMEIDA FESTIVAL

ISLINGTON'S ALMEIDA Theatre concludes its adventurous programme of contemporary music and performance with concerts of music by Vivier running up to 8 July.

BUTCHER-DURRANT-RUSSELL

THE LONDON-BASED trio of John Butcher (saxes), Phil Durrant (violin) and John Russell (guitar) play at Jackson's Lane Community Centre, Archway Road, on 5 July – as part of the Capital Radio Music Week Fringe. £2.50 (plus 30p membership) gets you in.

BLOOMSBURY FESTIVAL

THIS MONTH also sees a major series of new music concerts at London's Bloomsbury Theatre. The line-up of events is as follows: Laibach (8, 9), Agnes Bernelle (10), Oscar McLennan (11), Frank Chickens & Mark Springer (12, 13), Regular Music/Lol Coxhill & Steven Miller (15), Dagmar Kreis/Lol Coxhill & Brian Godding (16), James/Art Hammer Duo (17), Caroline Noh/Denise Bleck & The Kray Sisters (18), Moraz Bruford (19, 20), Michael Nyman (22), Evan Parker & Derek Bailey (23), Davis Thomas & The Pedestrians (24, 25), Lindsay Cooper's Music For Films/Phil Minton (26), Kate Westbrook Ensemble (27).

All tickets are £4 and all shows begin at 8pm.

SWANSEA

SWANSEA'S JAZZLAND Festival takes place over the weekend of 12–14 July, at the Path Pavilion and Brangwyn Hall. Among the line-up: Spike Robinson, Pizza Express All Stars, George Melly & John Chilton (12); Humphrey Lyttelton, George Fame (13); Wild Bill Davis Trio, Al Casey & Eddie Cleanhead Vinson (14).

... NOT FORGETTING MONTREUX

THIS YEAR'S Montreux Jazz Festival runs from 4–20 July and features the usual stellar cast. The programme includes: Breelli 85 (4), Aztec Camera & Everything But The Girl (5), Matt Bianco (6), Kid Creole & The Coconuts (7), Big Band Night (8), Leonard Cohen (9), Keith Jarrett (10), Manu Dibango Orch, Horace Silver, Swiss Jazz Pool (12), Ruben Blades (13), Miles Davis (14), R&B Summit (15), Jazz Now night (16), Jazz Funk night (17), Gilberto & Jobim (18), MJQ (19), Ten Band Jazz Marathon (20).

All details from Festival De Jazz Montreux, Service de location, Case 97, CH-1820 Montreux 1.

MR CLEANHEAD AT T' CLUB

LEEDS PUNTERS can see Eddie Cleanhead Vinson play at the Trades Club on 27 July. The remainder of the bill is: chamber music by Vivier, Tremblay and Bryers (1 July), Kopermkus (opera) (5/6 July) and Ondes Martenot & Chors (8 July). Details from the Almeida (01 359 4404).

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

SEVERAL ONE-OFF events at London's OEH of interest this month: Louis Armstrong Memorial Concert (6); Jazz in the London Youth Festival, featuring young jazz dance groups and orchestras (19); Ambit's evening of poetry and jazz, with Henry Lowther and friends (24); and Ova (25).

NEWS·WIRED

HOLLAND: NORTH SEA AND MORE

● A round-up from our man with the tulip in his buttonhole, FRANK VAN DIXHOORN.

OF COURSE you can expect Dizzy Gillespie, Dorothy Donegan, Oscar Peterson, Miles Davis and the MJQ at the North Sea Jazz Festival. But how about Keith Jarrett, Working Week, a Joe Zawinul solo recital, Jameleadeen Tecume and his bend, Sun Re, David Murray, the James Newton septet, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Don Lanphere and Cherie Venture — all during the opening night (12 July)?

Ikereke, crisp and impetuous, will appear on 13 July, as will Kip Hennehen, Arturo Sandoval, BB King, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, Slickaphonics and John Lurie with the Lounge Lizards. For concerts in a more subdued atmosphere, check out Joe Pess, the MJQ and of course the impeccable Tommy Flanagan. The festival will finish explosively on Sunday July 14th with Fats Domino, the Woody Herman All Stars (Buddy Tate, Al Cohn, Carl Fontana, Harry Edison, John Bunch, Jake Hanna and George Duvivier), Thad Jones and the Count Basie Orchestra with Joe Williams, Horace Silver, Benny Carter, Eddie Palmieri, Ray Barretto, Mel Lewis, Johnny Copeland with Arthur Blythe, Philip Walker with Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Ray Charles, the Peris Reunion Band (Donald Byrd, Woody Shaw, Nathan Davis, Johnny Griffin, Slide Hampton, Jimmy Woode, Kenny Drew, Billy Brooks), Cherie Heden and his Liberation Music Orchestra, Steps Ahead, the Johnny Otis Revue (with Bullmoose Jackson), Airto Moreira, Jack De Johnette, Albert Mangelsdorff and many more... The organisation of the Northsea Festival established a new international award for jazz musicians, called The Bird (Cherie Parker, that is). Musicians honoured this year include Miles Davis, Albert Mangelsdorff, Han Bennink and John Engels...

Saxophonists Sonny Fortune and James Spaulding will guest with the Barry Harris trio during the Amsterdam Jazz Festival (September 27–29, organised by the Dutch Broadcasting Union NOS), just as trombonists Julian Priester and Benny Powell. Bass players Meerten Altina and Ed de Vos received a special grant to compose original music, to be premiered at the festival. The Henry Threadgill group is scheduled for the opening night and they are still negotiating with the Don Cherry/Ed Bleckwell quintet and Stan Getz. Special attention to the NOS-Jazzcompetition, now in its 27th year, a true spring-board for young groups. Misha Mengelberg and Leo Cuypers were one-time winners...

New records on the exciting VARAJAZZ-label include offerings by Leo Cuypers and his Brullband and the Cees Slinger/Slide Hampton Quintet...



Mangelsdorff: North Sea tromboneliness

Short Strands

● A few stray threads from Kevin Henriques

NOT SURPRISINGLY perhaps the selection of Duke Ellington as *This Week's Composer* on Radio 3 in May did elicit one letter of protest to the *Radio Times*. Headed "Outrage on Radio 3", it was from two residents of an old people's home who said they wished to protest most vigorously against the decision to feature "a jazz musician" on the series. Saying they were devoted listeners to Radio 3 but thought the music programmes were not nearly so good as they had been, the two ladies expostulated: "But jazz! Really! We know people like jazz; very well, there are three other networks where it could be played, so why inflict it on us?"

In reply the RT's Letters Editor gently and politely told the two correspondents that if they listened to the programmes they might well be in for a pleasant surprise. They might find, the Editor advised, Duke's music "rather easier on the ear" than the Schoenberg, Ives, Webern and Hindemith featured recently in the same series.

THIRTY-TWO years after his death Django Reinhardt has been commemorated permanently by the formation of a society formed to promote interest in the life and the actual music of the gypsy guitarist. Co-founders of the society are Mike Peters (no mean guitarist himself, as he proved when over here with The Bechet Legacy), and Joseph Pastore Jr. Full details from the Django Reinhardt Society Inc, PO Box 661, FDR Station, NY, NY 10150. Membership costs \$14 per year.

JAZZ CLUB and pub audiences seeking information about the rather impressive but obscure baritone saxist and tenorist from America, Turk Mauro, who has toured this country twice within the last six months or so, might like to check out Mauro Turso. This saxist can be found on at least two Buddy Rich LPs from 1977, *Buddy Rich Plays and Plays* (RCA) and *Killing Me Forcefully on the Polish Poljazz* label. Yes, Turso and Mauro are the same person...

SENDING OUT a press release about a recent *Black on Black* programme on Channel 4, London Weekend Television referred to Art Blakey as "one of the world's greatest dancers". Seems LWT got confused between taps and traps...



Art Blakey

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her debut album and cassette

mix up



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PAL 6

PAL C6

IN HIS *On The Wire* last month, Paul Gilroy lobs a fair few questions – and the odd sneer – my way. Answering them, I may well run the risk of rewriting, though I assure you not reversing, the piece that caused the trouble in the first place, my article *Black Masks, White Masks in Wire 10*.

A harder man might suggest that Paul didn't actually read the piece but rather went over it with one of those undergraduate highlighting pens, picking out all the words likely to go off like Claymore mines when moved out of context. But then, I have a responsibility to make my points clearly, and I'll assume that his misunderstanding of me stems from my bum prose.

America, if not in Britain, blacks are included in the nation's portrait of itself, what is the problem? 'Portrait' is an extraordinary word to use in the context; it implies, as I suspect, a fixed and undynamic understanding of a society. America has indeed found a place for its black population in its self-portrait but hardly yet a central place. At the same time, Paul claims that it has only been within "cultural institutions" that black America has been able to give voice to what Richard Wright called its tradition of bitterness. Nonsense. Black Americans are conspicuously not assimilated into America's cultural institutions; yet at the same time, they and their music and arts and their political aspirations have made

other music. No mere sociological or historical explanation will now suffice. Such explanations are condescending and, paradoxically, unhistorical.

Marx produced a class- and economics-based model of society. But it was not a static model. It was one in which consciousness played a role in generating a future unprompted by the past. We now recognise that we may but need not be our fathers' sons and mothers' daughters. The present and the future are tied to the past but need not be replicas of it. I'd repeat that to insist on a view of jazz that doesn't take account of how far it has travelled is to condemn it to a bathetic self-repetition. Equally, it would be profoundly insulting to ignore the fact that jazz has become a wider property and that some of its most significant exponents have been white, not the white establishment, but figures no less alienated from the music and values of the Establishment. All emancipations are emancipations of all humanity, not of some subset of it.

I'm uneasy with autobiography but consider this: given that my background is Scots-Irish Protestant, am I entitled to define my life and everything that I do in terms of the oppressions that my (very near, remembered) ancestors suffered at the hands of the English or the IRA? Does that past entitle me to claim that all I do and say is the product of a historical accident or that what I express is my particular version of Afro-america, 'Caledonia', 'Alba', 'Delriada'? All those things belong on the lost-deposit political fringe; culture of that sort is condemned to the twilight. Like everyone else, I carry the past round with me. Like everyone from a minority, or peripheral, culture, I am more aware of my 'racial' past than a member of the Establishment, for whom it is so tacit and second-nature as to be unconscious. That is why the Establishment, who cannot remember the past, prolong its values. Those for whom the past is an active issue are by that fact those that are able to visualise a future that is different.

The arts in general are a bad place for

HEAVY WEATHER: SECOND STORM

BRIAN MORTON replies to Paul Gilroy's article in last month's issue and calls for an end to the "dumb show imposed on both history and music".

Paul's half-right in suggesting that the fundamental point was that white criticism has imprisoned black art in a narrow racial stereotype, characterised by anger, protest, violence. The missing half of the argument – the half which answers his later doubts – concerns that danger of confusing origins with nature, and description with prescription. My use of three white writers, Kerouac, Genet and Mailer was intended to highlight the way the stereotype was wielded. I was making a negative point.

It seems hard to dub this "pseudo-erudition" without giving any impression of the use to which these three unfashionable names were being put. It was precisely my point that their (in Paul's words) "relationships to black life and experience have been ambiguous to say the least".

There must be a distinction between correct identification of a cultural tradition (in all its socio-historical complexity) and the assumption that that tradition is defined for all time by those origins. That sounds uncomfortably like a doctrine of original sin and is, blatantly, the wrong sort of prescription. The only intentions served by perpetuating such definitions are oppressive and conservative ones.

To engage another of our points of contention, jazz has developed both "within and against" the history of black people in America. In my original piece, I quoted that phrase from black essayists James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, what I had thought was a striking verbal echo. Paul asks: "against what?" I had tried to explain that, too: against the outward pressure of white society and the inner pressure of belonging to a stigmatised subset of that society. Equally, the jazz improviser pushes away from the confines of the group; he is held back by the harmonic demands of the group and, no less, by the 'violence' or 'anger' established society 'hears' or chooses to assume in the music.

Paul is guilty of one major confusion and contradiction of his own. If, as he says "in

dramatic progress. There are now a significant number of black mayors, even in traditionally racist cities; in the run-up to the 1984 election a black candidate made the first significant moves in the direction of the White House. This is not reducing democracy to the ballot-box; it is stating an incontrovertible fact. Why choose to ignore progress? The worse-the-better radicalism is the most reactionary of all stances.

Paul talks of Afro-america. There is no such place. It makes no sense to declare UDI like

ON THE WIRE

this in order to separate off a single thread of history and create a science fiction republic of the mind based solely on an ethnic culture. Black Americans are now – whatever their origins – Americans: saying this in no way denies their history; it merely recognises that they have a history, that they are not merely static shapes on a nationalist tableau. Black Americans are still routinely denied their rights, most fundamentally the right to be considered Americans. They belong in that sense to the wider underclass, the dispossessed, those excluded by the Establishment, whatever brand of proletarian you care for.

Improvisation is not a property of blood or skin or skull-type. It is, uniquely, the property of disestablished classes. No political or cultural Establishment ever improvised. Equally, as we can all see, black music and art have established traditions of their own which have moved into the stage beyond 'mere' improvisation. Jazz has to be accorded the critical dignities and rights accorded to any

politics. They're too easily co-opted, softened to unintended ends, or no end at all. *Gulwiler's Travels* ends in the nursery. Rilke or Kafka never could; they are too subversive. It is the imagination which subverts, politics is too readily absorbed into the accepted syntax and is, in any case, the art of the possible – and thus allowable – rather than of the desirable and thus prohibited. Accept that black Americans have made great strides in political terms, accept that "their" music is now part of a history that includes them and others. Accept finally that the two can't be held to ransom for each other.

The quickest way of denying the past is living there. My original piece was about masks, not faces, about a dumb-show imposed on both history and music. What is being obscured is no sort of "general, idealistic portrait of mankind" (portraits again) but precisely a shifting, dynamic process of change for which there are better metaphors and models than race and blood. Surely we've had enough of those? ■



...and now I'm playing from the heart

**CHARLES DE
LEDESMA follows**

**the Afro-Jazz
trail as it winds
through London's
music scene and
talks to some of
the expatriate
musicians who
are bringing a
new African
vibration to the
circuit.**

THOUGH MOST of the Africans featured here moved over to London in the 70s it is very apparent from most of their stories that years of hard graft – either within the orbit of the mainstream music community or outside of it – and sheer survivalism preceded the time when they got the opportunity to express their own musical vision.

As well as the individuals end bands spotlighted below a plethora of other combos are constantly rising and falling on the periphery of London's jazz end community music scenes. Some but by no means all of those active at the moment are Kalimba, a kwela jazz band based in Brighton whose personnel is built around a community of South African exiles; Kabbala, who formed in '81 and blend highlife with Afro-funk; Supercombo who play utempro Sierre Leonean rhythms; guitarist Abdul T Jay's African Culture with their intensive brand of soukous; Tony Allen, the ex-Fela cohort's hectic juju-afrobeat; Ekome, from Bristol, who dance to quickfire West African ritual drumming; and Somo Somo led by Zairean Mose Fan Fan, who play crisp soukous and include a tremendous South African vocalist in Doreen Webster.

Promoters like Ricky Stein, Neosam, Will Walker, the Womad Foundation and Julian Bahula wrestle with the logistics of bringing acts over from Africa. Small indie labels like Earthworks, Sterns, Oval, Africogram, TS Africa and Ebusia put out under-distributed, under-marketed but high quality slabs of vinyl. But on the grassroots level no single set up has done more for African music in London than Jenarko Arts in Dalston.

Initially formed by Jazira founder manager Richard Austin and Ghanaian drummer Isaac Tagoe, Jenarko has blossomed over the last four years thanks as much to Urban Aid's Inner City Partnership Fund (which provides administrative and running costs) as to the 300 people a week who use the classes and workshops in African music and dance. As well as Jazira, African Connection, Supercombo, Kabbala and African Culture have grown up through Jenarko.

Richard Austin sees the Arts Centre's main function when it comes to bands as providing the stepping stone towards agencies, gigs and ultimately recording and publishing arrangements. Jenarko have also been extremely important as a much needed public relations exercise which ranges from suggestions on voice and stage projection to technical and compositional aspects.

Jenarko's future is relatively safe as most of

the subsidy comes from Central Government and only a little from the GLC and Hackney council, although they are looking for new premises which would make more commercial ventures a possibility. If this comes about then Jenarko's vital role in stimulating African music here is likely to become even more influential and effective.

DISTRICT SIX

IASK District Six founders and South African exiles Brian Abrahams, Mervyn Africa and Russell Herman if they, like Hugh Masakela will be returning to their country to play at independence. They laugh. "I guess so," says Abrahams. "We certainly won't be going back before then." Escaping from South Africa in the seventies has meant that they lived through the thin end of apartheid's wedge for longer than their township jazz forbears Masakela, Ibrahim and co. The psychological and physical stains of oppression infuse their music.

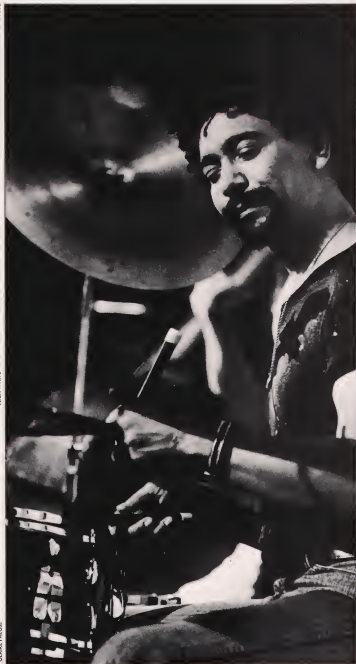
Brian Abrahams is a relaxed and carefully-spoken man who exudes an elder brother-like maturity. He started playing drums in the late fifties, sitting in on the Cecil May Quartet at the Catcombs nightclub in Cape Town. "Hearing music all around me was the best feature of my upbringing," he recalls. A few years later (circa '62) he joined the Cape Coon carnival which toured all over S.A., a sort of lightweight precursor to King Kong. Abrahams developed a wide flexibility on drums ranging from indigenous folk rhythms to backing Nat King Cole crooners. "Then I spent seven years in Swaziland working in a variety band and various cool bebop outfits including the Roy Peterson Trio and the Howard Belling Quartet."

Phenist Mervyn Africa and guitarist Russell Herman are younger, more animated and more angry. They grew up together in Cape Town and played in many and various incarnations, the most notable being Oswetie (Zulu for We Don't Know). "If it hadn't been for our teachers, who for the most part are rotting in poverty over there, we would never have had the discipline, technique or direction to stick at being musicians or the confidence to leave," comments an embittered Russell Herman.

"Robbie Jansen, a brilliant saxophonist, flautist and singer was a major inspiration; he and two of my oldest mentors, pianists Henry February and Chris Schilder, have never managed to leave. They are in effect under house arrest over there – yet they are musicians of the calibre of Dollar or Dudu!" adds Mervyn Africa.

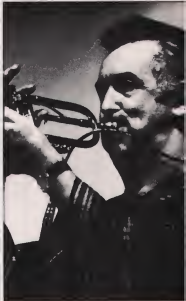
the Afro-beat goes round and round. Left: Brian Abrahams of District Six; right: Sam Ashiey and Stu Hammer of Mi-Life International.

NICK WHITE



NICK WHITE

CLAUDE PIERRE



AFRO JAZZ

When Abrahams arrived in London in '73 he continued to play in the variety scene, getting a job up at the Mecca in Norwich playing pop standards. "None of it meant anything to me but I stuck at it before heading for London and meeting up with the African musicians there. The spiritual warmth amongst them all was immense. I played a lot with Zila and Dudu really helped bring a lot of new, much more expressive music out of me. And when I saw Louis (Mohlolo) I realised that there were no limits."

Mervyn Africa arrived in '79 after an adventurous trip up the West coast of Africa to Gabon. En route he'd been arrested and had miraculously got away before being shot. In London he quickly installed himself in Behulu's Jazz Africa, also playing with Zila. His piano technique developed at a phenomenal pace – coping as ably with evoking the beauty of South Africa with the same passionate lyricism of classical Ibrahim and, correspondingly, the beast of South Africa as he roars off with a McGregoresque flourish into funnily improvisations.

Mervyn's friend Russell arrived in '81. "District Six was the name of the area we were brought up in in Cape Town. It doesn't exist for 'residential' purposes anymore – the authorities bulldozed it. Can you imagine what it's like being told in a letter that your home town doesn't exist anymore?" says Herman. "It seemed appropriate to call the band we were soon to form District Six as together we seemed to be reassessing our past and exploring our feelings about our country's music and politics. We grew to realise that because we were musicians from South Africa we had a responsibility to voice our people's feelings."

The music which has since issued forth from District Six is full of the sharp clarity such a thorough examination of the matrices of history, race, personal motive and collective purpose can bring about. "Tracks on 'Akuzwakale' are us going back to our roots; to our real music," explains Africa. "For many years I played shapes and forms – now I'm playing from the heart," adds Abrahams.

The new fleshed out to a sextet early last year. Fusion bassist Didi Katz came in on bass and Hermon Smith and Jim Dvorak contributed neat, sharp sax and trumpet. They've contributed enormously to the fattening out of the District Six sound, helping it to become an acutely sensitive merger of township jazz and muscular, disciplined improvising.

For the near future District Six intend to tour Germany, Switzerland, Holland and France and will play over the summer at the Tring and Chesham festivals. As for the immediate future... "We've got a rehearsal this week," says Abrahams. He and Russell Herman grin at each other. The excitement generated by their need to play music makes even the midweek rehearsal a vital event.

GASPAR'S DEEPER MEANING

GASPAR LAVAL has the odd distinction of being the only London-based African musician to have played in a supergroup. It was nearly fifteen years ago when Ginger Baker's Airforce played the sleepy little Sussex retrack of Plumpton. Laval remembers the

event fondly: he was impressed by Baker's wild power and the sheer size of the ensemble's sound. Multi-percussionist Laval went on to do session work with Vinegar Joe, Elvin Jones, Elkie Brooks, Robert Palmer, Funkadelic and the Rolling Stones but regressed his roots when he joined Afro-rock band Clancy in '75. I ask him whether it wasn't hard to keep a rhythmic centre while playing with such an astonishing variety of musicians.

"I've always listened to a wide range of music. Not just the dozens of rhythms across Africa but classical, rock and recently funk and punk as well. I never had a particular fusion in mind – I've never consciously tried to get one form with another – but my rhythm would never have come out the way it has done if I hadn't opened my mind to these various strands of music."

When Laval's first LP *Ajomase* came out in '81 it went over the heads of most people here and surprised especially the musicians who heard it over in his home country of Nigeria. "They were confused," he explains, "because it wasn't juju and it wasn't Ibibabo but it had a sound which they expected to be able to recognise. I've called my rhythm *Afriki* which includes in it the word *Onko* ('deeper meaning' in English). It isn't a copy of any existing traditional rhythm but a product of all my research and speculations into rhythm."

Laval's follow-up LP has been a year in the making and he's taken on very few projects so as to give himself the time to finish it by June. "The feel of the new LP is different from *Ajomase*. I'm now the head of my family so in recent years I've had to frequently return to Nigeria. As I always listen to lots of music when I travel a lot of new ideas have soaked into *Afriki*."

Gaspar Laval's new band *Africa One* – together since Womad '82 – includes ex-Farangi Wamori Buki Leo Alolavi on tenor sax and an ex-Fela Kuti guitarist, Oke Lusi. But the power in the sound revolves around the percussive quintet. Quite a unique sound results – spiky, snorting tenor runs from Buki dwembow into Laval's nchly seamed *Afriki* polyrhythms.

The new LP is coming out on Laval's Cup label in conjunction with the Sydney-run Hot label. "Martin Jellis who used to be the Warner Brothers started the Australian operation. It's the first UK/Australia African music release, and hopefully it will stimulate interest in our music over there."

Kwabena Oduro-Kwarteng is the founder of punchy highlife jazz band Highlife International. With two LPs out on the Sterns label, prodigious round-the-capital gigging and extremely successful tours of France, Holland and Italy behind them, Highlife Int. have consolidated a reputation as London's most professional Afro-jazz band.

Unlike many of the prime movers within the African musicians' community, Kwabena prefers to not take on board the influences of too many other genres, whether African, American or otherwise. "We want to stick to our particular brand of highlife. Our concern is to travel further into the centre of Ghana's indigenous jazz music."

Highlife's personnel includes ex-Ronnie Scott Quintet Stu Hammer on trumpet, and Ghanaians Frank Williams on tenor sax, Sam

"Can you imagine what it's like being told that your home town doesn't exist any more?"

Ashley on congas, Herman Asafo on bass and Kofi-Adu on drums. Kofi has been much in demand as a percussionist since arriving in London in the mid-seventies. He used to play with Pigbag, Osibisa and Traffic and now often plays with George Lee's Anansi.

Innovation within African music isn't going to come from Highlife International; but with so many highlife-inspired bands like Jazira and Kabbala taking under their wings a wide range of styles which inevitably brings into question the identity of their music, that isn't a bad thing at all. Kwabena clinches the argument.

"African music can't develop without a regard for its roots – it runs the danger of becoming absorbed and losing its charm and its history."

NEW EXPERIMENTS FROM A YOUNGER GENERATION

MUSANA MUSA at twenty-eight is right at the forefront of the younger cache of African musicians to have settled in London. Musa's been living here for twenty years and in a free period last winter after he'd disbanded the soulous-spiced African Connection he returned to Sierra Leone.

"What I was there I listened a lot to Goonkay, which is the name for the more percussive rhythms in Sierra Leonean music," says Musa. "Whereas the first African Connection fused soulous with our indigenous Quanza Quanza style, during this recent visit I saw how vital it was to get away from patterns inherent in modern African pop. I was reminded of how rock'n'roll and r'n'b inflections have penetrated our music."

Both the spontaneity of Goonkay and rock patterns lie at the base of African Connection Two's redefinition of Afro-Western music. Musa explains: "Our percussionist Mamada who's also from Sierra Leone has a fast and furious style. But though he's played with many American jazz musicians his style is essentially Goonkay. Drummer Paapa Mensah from Ghana is a 'hard' drummer in the rock sense as opposed to the lighter, he-hat emphasis of African kit drummers."

Likewise the two guitarists have contrasting backgrounds. Lead Len Jones is grounded in Afro-rock – a style which gathered momentum in the West and Central countries in the late sixties as a radical response to the true blue Afrikaness of the Franco sound – and rhythm Aziz Salim plays the more traditional clipped, jangly style. Add to this the strong, jazz voice of Delandria, Ray Carliss' explosive sax and Kevin Robinson's trumpet, and there's not a shadow of a doubt that in unison African Connection Two bite with an unorthodox sharpness.

"It's important to change the references of African music, not just to let a wider audience participate but because this is the only way our music will develop. I don't think there can be 'pure' African music here in London – perhaps there can't even be in the Africa of 1985. Music everywhere is subject to the global melting pot."

GEORGE LEE AND THE LOST ART OF DISCIPLINE

"I'LL READILY admit that much of my life is a mess. Nothing matters as much as music."

People think that I'm happy but I'm beering a cross and I can't take it off my neck." Characteristically strong words from George Lee who, after thirty years playing sax and flute on countless sessions and with numerous bands, is now leading his own band Anansi and has his own label Ebusia – which earlier this year put out the first LP he's ever recorded under his own byline.

George Lee was born in Ghana in 1938, joined the Ghanaian Messenger Dance Band at eighteen (they opened for Louis Armstrong when he toured Ghana in 1956) and went with them to the World Fair in Berlin in 1962. He didn't return to Africa and instead settled in London. In the late '60s he joined Johnny Nash's band Sons Of The Jungle and cultivated a reputation as an on-the-ball session saxophonist and flautist in the rock and reggae music worlds.

In the seventies he wrote the music for the adaptation of *Black Mikado*. "The producer approached me and asked me to listen to the original Mikado soundtrack with a view to rewriting it and 'making it black'! It was an exhausting but inspiring exercise."

But four years of *Black Mikado* had made Lee itchy for a return to his roots. It was at the Camden Festival in '81 that he made the chance encounter which helped him to clarify where he should be musically. He found himself shunning the stage with Chris McGregor. "Right from the first moment when we started playing I felt an electricity between us. After playing together a few more times and getting to know each other I realised that Chris was re-connecting me with the Africa I'd lost: our playing seemed to be saturated by that vision."

"I always thought the Brotherhood Of Breath's greatest weakness was its shambolic vastness," says Lee. "Since Chris and I have been composing together the emphasis of the B of B compositions has changed – the material we played in Mozambique was very structured by comparison."

If George Lee's impact on B of B isn't easy to judge, McGregor's on Anansi is very apparent. He's played piano at quite a number of Anansi gigs after their formation a year ago – a tape of 'Nakinye' recorded at the 100 Club shows the quickfire empathy between piano and Lee's tenor. Lee's fellow cohorts in Anansi are South Africans Robert Payne on piano and Ernest Motile on bass and Ghanaians Kofi Adu (who also plays in Highlife International) on drums and Nana Tsooe on percussion.

The method of the music amply demonstrated by the charming single 'Seashells' is a thoroughgoing merger of West African rhythms with jazz-funk's laidback precision, overlaid with Lee's in-the-groove sax and flute solos and Payne's busy piano.

For the future George Lee is optimistic. "Ebusia has so many plans. We intend to put out Robert Payne's debut LP and perhaps a live recording of the Brotherhood before Anansi's follow up. I'm off to Ghana in June to record a highlife LP and hopefully the long-projected Anansi tour of Africa will happen later in the year." George Lee's confidence and enthusiasm is infectious – he's been a long time learning his craft and all the signs point to a busy and fruitful period ahead. ■



Sakis: "Phew! They spelled my name right!"

LIVE WIRE

LE MANS FESTIVAL 18–21 April

UNEXPECTEDLY, THIS year's Le Mans Jazz Festival, or Europa Jazz Festival as it was officially called, received a tremendous boost of publicity. It started amid controversy about its poster, which showed 12 arrows carrying the colours of European countries flying in the direction of a black drummer. The arrows and the colours symbolizing European countries taking part in the festival, the black drummer symbolizing American-born jazz.

There is no question that by choosing this poster festival organiser Armand Meignan wanted to say that jazz, which was in the beginning of the century a purely American art form, has become successfully integrated into the European musical fabric. The poster was supposed to be funny and colourful; however, some black American musicians living in France saw in this poster a racist and chauvinist image. They were supported by some white European musicians, and the row started. Long before the festival major French newspapers were writing about the poster and Le Mans Jazz. The scandal ultimately splashed over the national borders with Mike Zwern's article in the international *Herald Tribune*. What was meant as an innocent, visual indicator of integrated spirit became an artificially created sore in the public eye.

Notorious publicity alone could certainly not account for a big, appreciative crowd which filled the magnificent Abbaye de Le Epau almost to capacity every day of the festival. Predictably, as soon as the music started the scandal was forgotten. The memories of music, however, will linger on.

Greek piano player Sakis Papadimitriou gave an illuminating, brilliant performance. He

spent most of the time bending over the strings of the instrument and got to the keys only for two short pieces. There is nothing new in playing with the strings of the piano, of course. What is new, however, is that when Papadimitriou starts doing it, it is not just picking and plucking, noodling and doodling. He studied the anatomy of the strings for more than a decade, and he can produce any sound he wants. Those strings respond to Sakis' caressing touch with a multitude of sounds, evocative of an organ, a guitar, or both played simultaneously. His pieces unavoidably shape themselves into some kind of sensible structures, and his structures are invariably coloured by the undercurrent of Byzantine, Mediterranean moods. He is proud to be Greek, and he is not ashamed to say it through his music.

Sakis Papadimitriou appeared on the stage again on the last day of the festival in a quartet led by violinist Carlos Zingaro of Portugal. The other members of the quartet were French bassist Jean Bolcato and Swiss saxophonist Daunik Lazro. The group had the appropriate title: EUROPA QUARTET.

So great was the unity of these musicians that it was a shocking surprise to find out after the performance that they had never played together before and met only hours before the actual concert. The performance was pure magic. It had everything that new music has to offer. They sacrificed their personal preferences for the sake of creating a work of art based on collective spirit, full of events and unpredictable turns. They developed dense textures with waves of relaxation, allowing each other brilliant solos.

Listening to the cassette recording after the concert Daunik Lazro exclaimed: "I can't believe it! It is written music!" The audience



Mr Shepp looks askance

LIVE WIRE

was clapping for ten minutes, but they didn't play more. They were probably surprised more than anybody else by what they had achieved.

Han Bennink also appeared twice, and both times he created mayhem. The first time, in the company of Peter Brotzman and Albert Mangelsdorff, his sticks were flying all over the stage, a chair landed on top of the piano, a motorcycle helmet was turned into a hi-hat, and ultimately a heavy stone, as old as the walls of the Abbey, was regularly dropped on the stage from his waist height – which is a shoulder height of an average man. However, in the final analysis, whatever Han Bennink does on the stage is all music, and if one distances oneself from his acrobatics, or tries to close the eyes, one could be amazed how much music he was producing – providing a fine balance between the wild blowing of Peter Brotzman and subtle virtuosity of Albert Mangelsdorff.

The culminating point of the festival was reached one day before its end by the Mike

Westbrook orchestra, which got a standing ovation. The orchestra, consisting mainly of British musicians, performed Mike Westbrook's latest 5-piece suite "On Duke's Birthday" – a homage to Duke Ellington permeated with love for the Master, but devoid of any imitations. It was a highly emotional experience, and one couldn't help feeling that Mike Westbrook let us witness the beautiful intimacy of his relationship with Duke. Every piece of the suite opened in a quiet, pensive way and was gradually developed into a powerful climax. Mike Westbrook's 11-piece band is a constellation of equal stars, but cellist Georgie Born and guitarist Brian Godding shone a little brighter than the rest.

Lastly, some credit for the triumph of Mike Westbrook and others should go to the festival organiser Armand Meignan. A poet once said that "real art is a journey to the unknown". Let's not forget that it is Armand Meignan who takes his chances by taking us on this adventurous journey. The programme of his festival differs greatly from the programmes of

Nice, Montreux, Cool, North Sea and Capitel – and it is exactly what makes his festival so precious.

Leo Feigin

PAT METHENY Hammersmith Odeon May 2/3

THAT PAT Metheny is currently fievour of the month is in no doubt. What is fascinating is that his role as star of massive European tours is a prize won slowly. It is likely to mean that since the young Oklahoma guitarist did not arrive as a one-hit wonder, he won't depart that way either.

Metheny's current band is more sophisticated than its predecessors, and the performers less likely to follow in the leader's wake, which has added depth to the whole enterprise. This is an additional ingredient in the mix that makes his current show a big event in all senses.

The stage at Hammersmith was littered with all the exotic instrumentation of the band, scattered among a good deal of vegetation and greenery. While the audience was still settling in, an urgent, high-pitched noise of indecipherable origin filled the air. When the punters were sufficiently wound up and perplexed by it, Metheny came on from the wings, hunched over his guitar and producing this frantic, trebly scramble of sound from it. The other performers joined in from the auditorium and the side doors, banging drums and clamouring on trumpets. It was – more or less – the opening section of Metheny's most recent album *First Circle* – a funny, cacophonous and affectionate gesture to high-school marching bands, played with the authentic disregard for pitch. Metheny used on this occasion the reference to his current work merely as a preamble to a documented history of most of his brief career, shifting abruptly into the country-tinged songs of his earlier

Pat frets



work, which he still plays with as much engagement as ever. But the quality of his soloing was relatively unremarkable until the band shifted into a fast, boppy blues for which the leader adopted a solid guitar with the sound quality of a fifties Duane Eddy single.

Metheny revealed two of his strongest suits by this means. One is that he is a linear improviser of considerable ingenuity, despite

to their social customs and the beautiful music of the kooraa, baloo and the haunting liddle music played on the naaneeru. Commentary was provided by Sida Jatta, a Mandinka scholar. Maybe the Commonwealth Institute in London will host yet another African Music Village, where many of the Mandinka instruments and accompanying musicians can be seen in "real life".

Muddy shots of steel foundries and

LIVE WIRE

the occasionally bland, movie-music image of his work, and his long blues solo included a good deal of fresh, muscular phrasology. The other is that he is a tireless and audacious experimenter with sound textures, particularly in the splicing together of unlikely combinations of sound quality and idiom. Bop as played by a First Wave rock 'n' roll band was a breath of fresh air considering the hushed, censored, rather apologetic tone in which the idiom is usually dealt with on the guitar.

All the more orchestral and sophisticated representations of Metheny's fascination with texture were subsequently elaborated on in the band's long set, moving through the ethereal, spacious, synthesiser music of the "As Falls Wichita" era, through the crisp, taut elegance of "Offtrap", up to the present fusion of most of the work of the past five years in "First Circle". In the midst of it, the guitarist played a lengthy, frantic free passage which was vigorous, but not a comfortable idiom for a player so unambiguously devoted to completely orthodox harmonic principles.

In jazz terms, Metheny always presents a quandary, since much of the improvising energy is cramped by the sheer volume of written material, the suffocating plushness of the electronic orchestration and the pressures of a record-promoting tour towards presenting a package of all the band's saleable virtues. But jazz fans would be unwise to write off Metheny as just a travelling salesman with a guitar. He is a consummately musical artist, his interests undeniably not limited purely to improvisation, and he is helping to bring jazz-influenced music to a new public.

John Fordham

REPERCUSSIONS — A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC Channel 4

TO CONDENSE a Celebration of African American music into a series of seven one-hour programmes was, even for Channel 4, an over-ambitious project prompting the inevitable question of what had been left on the cutting-room floor or whatever is today's equivalent.

Directors Geoffrey Haydon and Dennis Marks let the music of each programme tell its own story, thereby preventing treatment of the series as a "history of black music". However, despite this well-intentioned philosophy and the acceptance that music is the universal language of mankind, there were times when the "roots" were not sufficiently exposed; and programme two, which illustrated the acappella gospel quartet tradition, was certainly marred by lack of commentary.

Born Musicians, the opening programme, presented the music of Mandinka society in the Gambia: musical inheritance of the jalis (folk-tellers) within that society, an introduction

coalmines of Bessemer, Alabama, set the scene for programme two, *On The Battlefield*. These industries have supplied the livelihood and means of support for many gospel quartets which have flourished in this area, reaching back to the 1920's. We met the Sterling Jubilee Quartet (formed in 1940), giving tuition to the young Birmingham Sunkites, who follow the acappella tradition. There was a short glimpse of the old "lining out" preaching, which should have been elaborated upon. The Four Eagle Gospel Singers sang the old hymn "On The Battlefield — Waiting for the Lord"; then came Memphis groups the Harps of Melody (a female quartet) and the magnificent Pattersons, raising the roof with "Old Landmark". A finale by the Sterling Jubilees "When My Saviour Calls My Name" and . . . just as things were truly hotting up, it was all over!

Legends of *Rhythm and Blues* took us to the American West and Johnny Otis, proclaiming with all his momentum as a Minister of the Church that "rhythm and blues started in Los Angeles in the early 40's".

This ingenious statement ringing in our ears, we were off on a tour of predominantly white LA clubs and bars, a scene which appears both drastic and plastic. Counterpointing this case came the reminiscences of musicians such as Lloyd Glenn and Lowell Fulson, both of whom live in LA, the superb piano and singing of Charles Brown and the saxophone acrobatics of Big Jay McNeely. The film earned an easy West Coast living to be earned in the bars and clubs for stars of *Rhythm and Blues*, despite Big Mama Thornton's appearance at the Varieties Arts Theatre which was a sad event, being filmed so near to her death in July 1984. Joe Liggins (Mr Honeydripper) and the magnificent Margie Evans, a statuesque Bessie Smith of a woman belting out blues, made up for the short-comings of downtown LA and its superficial film.

Sit Down and Listen, the story of Max Roach, had its roots in the church, Mount Carmel Baptist in North Carolina and the Concord Baptist in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York, where the young Roach was provided with his first drum kit. There were the oh-too-brief reminiscences of meetings with Duke Ellington and contemporaries Charlie Parker, Ellison Young, Miles Davis etc, all of which could have filled a seven-part series, let alone the mere ten minutes' "memory line" allotted in the film. We saw this eloquent, elegant man, speaking to an earnest high school audience about "what's going on in your head when you're drumming" — dialogue, phrases, building to groups of sentences, making a paragraph. It has a story . . . and the story is the character of the piece itself.

We saw the private side of Max Roach in his New York apartment; his reflections of black politics in America; and Max Roach the master drummer, working with his Quartet (Odean Pope, Tyrone Brown and Cecil Bridgewater),



Max: a man and his cymbal

alongside the "European" partnership of his double quartet work with the Swedenborg String Quartet. The linking theme music throughout the series was provided by Max Roach's percussive ensemble, M'Boom Re: Percussion, underlining his commitment to the percussive lineage of Africa. There was film of this ensemble, which incorporates many instruments of percussion from the third world, thus forming a link with programme five, *The Drums of Dogbon*, Northern Ghana, the next programme in the series.

As with the Mandinka, there is great courtesy extended by the Dagbamba people towards their musicians. The respect is for kinship patterns, the political and social customs of tribal life and the influence of musicians among the chieftancies.

"We are still holding the wisdom of our grandfathers inside our drumming" — a statement which affirms this respect for the musicians who officiate in all aspects of tribal life — the music for weddings, funeral dances, political occasions and the dances of Simpa (danced by young girls), the Tore (danced by the older women) and the Tek (danced by groups of men in swirling robes). The film was in the true celebratory tradition of a rich and great musical heritage.

The cross-fertilization and hybrid traditions which have contributed to the musical culture of the Caribbean were documented in *Caribbean Crucible*, programme six. Jamaican folklorist Louise Bennett described the rhythm of language — found in the rural Jamaican mento music, in the pogo (based on Poomania, an Afro-Protestant religion), in the reggae of today (Big Youth) and the rhythm of the spoken language throughout the island of Jamaica. There were fascinating traditions such as Jonkonnu, performed during the Christmas season, which incorporates British pagan survivals such as the Morris, the Sword Dance and mummies' plays, performed alongside the dance and masking traditions earned over from West Africa. The Kumina rituals, found in the eastern part of Jamaica,

are the strongest form of neo-African influence in the island which belongs to the Maroons of Moore Town. The Maroons are descendants of slaves who escaped into the interior forests of Jamaica, forming their own societies and thereby ensuring the survival of rituals such as Kromenti play, a ceremony held to attract spirits of ancestors.

By contrast, the music of the Dominican Republic was far more Spanish in terms of melody, particularly that of the merengue accordion music. An ambitious project in terms of time allotted for one single programme but perhaps there is more in the pipeline for a future series?

Africa Comeback explored today's popular music in West Africa and the influences which

he's always been there. There was no first time.

Except of course that there was, a long time before I was around or listening. Missing that kind of e thing fuels a jealousy that can turn into fake diffidence. "Duke? I don't believe he was that good, you only say that because you were there, you should have seen..." etc.

But hearing echoes redefined instead of revered: this kind of hearing can turn you back to listen properly... what's this Westbrook doing, then? Sculpting sound? Yes, I can hear that - is that what it's about? And the whole thing starts to move again, not like it once did - past times are always lost to the young end debt - but with something useful, living, tasty.

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have created the phenomenon of AfroPop. Exponents of African popular music have travelled widely and have incorporated saxophones, trumpets, electric guitars, electric organs and "jazz" drum kits into the African elements of their music. Besides the pop is the traditional highlife and sweet palm wine guitar music of Kò Nmo and the modern Kplaniogo dancing, which has developed from the fusion of ancient rhythms. This music now caters for the young urban city dwellers who dance in the crowded nightclubs and halls of Accra. It seems that everyone is always just one step away from dancing - and this is the true celebration of African music.

Adele Jones

(There is an accompanying book to this series, published by Century Publishing Co., Portland House, 12/13 Greek Street, London, W1V 5LE.)

Mike Westbrook turns some of the same tricks, carving a piece for improvisation inside composition. Something about his sound is very English - hard to pin down exactly what, when the History of Jazz, Contributions, British is not an index entry overhanging with page numbers in anyone's book. He gives important room to the wider end of sound end fury (Chris Biscoe encouraged to burst into a desolate pastorate of bamboo flute and piano with a waggling alto clarinet rasp, and carrying on to duet with Kate Westbrook's alarmingly unsingable Tiger-Growl), but there's nothing here of discipline, movement between movements slaying sharp and cheekily deft. It's too large and varied for anything like the intensity of The Westbrook Blake, and the limited deployment of Kate Westbrook's and Phil Minton's voices would be unnatural cruelty to those of us ushered in by that port, if

His heterogeneous ideas are bursting from the lips and fingers of his Orchestra: Minton and Westbrook K., as mentioned; Biscoe on a minor dynasty of horns, effortlessly bluesending the most outle squeal or scrape; Danilo Terenzi, inducing crippled syncopation to rein in the unwieldy trombone; Dominique Pifarély, calmly treading the Valley of the Shadow of electric jazz violin, no fear end no danger of gloopy Ponty mis-sentiment here; Georgie Bom's tightly cello scribbles; Brian Godding's easy shift from negging silent nothingness to fullest Hendrix harbour-mirring; Tony Marsh drumming at ease within the rhythm, no drop or clatter so fly that it isn't safely within the skin of the sound; Stuart Brooks as the undercover man, until a sudden piercing flugelhorn shepe; and Mr Interlocutor in the White Suit. Mike Westbrook stily to pretend to us out here that he masters all this motion through the ebony-ivory remote control device.

An old and a satisfying story: when the despised beggar branch of the family turns out rightlier heirs after all. Westbrook the Toiler inherits at least this part of the Duke's Jazz Realm: the true socialist republic of musicians, where eleven folk can be themselves and still work as one.

Mark Sinker

ARCHIE SHEPP Queens Hotel, Cheltenham: 8 May

ARCHIE SHEPP is a man tied to the weight of his past. His swashbuckling tenor inextricably linked to the 'New Thing' of the sixties; the inspirational seat-of-the-pants improviser, the poet musician who became the front man for Free Jazz is, whether he likes it or not, bound to be measured in terms of his past achievements. But, it seems, the past hangs like an albatross around his neck. Now a Professor at the University of Massachusetts, he is part of the very establishment that incurred his displeasure during his salad days. Perhaps that is why his appearance for Cheltenham Jazz sounded as if he had ceased to compete.

Fronting a docile rhythm section, with pianist Albert Sarko fighting to keep the proceedings together, he opened with a twelve-bar blues. Almost immediately Shepp fired the opening salvo in what was to become a war of attrition with his soundmen. Unsettled, he followed with a modal number in which all hands engaged in a spot of on the job training. Shepp appeared to be teaching himself double-breathing amid squeaks and flurries and the bass player ploughed a lone furrow between pianist and drummer.

Shepp's tone on tenor and soprano was big and muscular (and occasionally sharp), but all too often seemed devoid of ideas in his solos, which were fragmented affairs. On 'Moose the Mooche', Parker's theme seemed just beyond his technical reach, but 'My Romance' was rhapsodic, booby-trapped with indolent flurries to mark intensity. 'Mame Rose' had a long half-mugged, half-sung stream of consciousness vocal in his slightly uneasy baritone - complete with a Billy Eckstine vibrato.

Was this then the unification of the traditions of jazz - from spirituals and Blues to Be-Bop and Free - the iconoclastic link man spanning the eras, the poet-musician articulating the black tradition? Perhaps, but not on this outing. The social protest man is turning entertainer - witness 'Denny Boy' and 'Girl from Ipanema'.

Stuart Nicholson



The Westbrooks rehearse the HARRY LIME THEME

MIKE WESTBROOK ORCHESTRA: ON DUKE'S BIRTHDAY ICA, London: 14 May

I HAVE A FRIEND who says he wishes he'd never seen *The Third Man*: "because that way I'd be able to see it for the first time ever, again..." Living immersed in music, it doesn't seem possible to capture the idea of Hearing Duke For The First Time. Somehow

he only allowed us time to brood. As it is we're clambering too quickly across other puzzles and delights to have such thoughts: it isn't till after it's over that it strikes one how neatly all this noise has been subsumed into one (long) whole, and kept unified.

Heterogeneous ideas yoked by violence together: indeed. Form and structure are really nothing but a kind of metaphysical glue that's working best when it's least remarked.

NAT ADDERLEY**JON FADDIS****AIRTO/FLORA PURIM****ELLA FITZGERALD****LUTHER ALLISON****TOMMY FLANAGAN****COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA**
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YAL WILMER/FORMAT

JOHN GILMORE

A QUIET SCREAMER FROM MISSISSIPPI

The saxophonist who's been a heartbeat in Sun Ra's Arkestra for decades is a seminal part of modern jazz — yet he remains a shadowy, enigmatic figure. In this rare interview, VAL WILMER talks to him about Ra, Coltrane and a lifetime's dedication to music.

AT THE beginning of the Sixties when Sun Ra took his Arkestra from Chicago to New York, employment for such a large and idiosyncratic band was hard to come by. The musicians lived Uptown on 87th Street and played together virtually every day but for people like saxophonist John Gilmore, accustomed to the response of an audience, this wasn't enough. He'd go down to Birdland every Monday, the traditional jam-session night, take his tenor with him and ask to sit in. Four months passed before he was allowed on the bandstand.

One night the houseband led by Latin percussionist Willie Bobo included another member of Sun Ra's reed section, Pat Patrick. With twenty minutes to go before the end of the session, Patrick persuaded the leader, "Let my man play". Begrudgingly, Bobo agreed, but the minute Gilmore unshipped his horn and started blowing, he realised he was in difficulty. He'd become so accustomed to playing with Sun Ra's rhythm section that the more aggressive New Yorkers threw him off balance. "I couldn't get my thing going," he recalled. "I said, 'Oh-oh, you mean to tell me I waited this long and gonna sound like an ass?'. I started getting nervous because, you know, the impressions that you make in a place like Birdland, they mean a lot. They mean whether you work or not. I said I'd better get something together quick!"

Unable to play with the musicians, Gilmore decided to play against them. "I played contrapuntal to what they were doing rather than trying to get into the same groove. Anyway, it worked out. It worked out so good that they didn't know whether I was playing anything or not!"

Musicians and audience alike were confused at the totally new direction the music had taken. One person was not, John

Coltrane was sitting at the back of the club and the impact on him was amazing. He ran right up to the stage, shouting: "John Gilmore, you motherfucker. You got it, you got it — you got the concept!" Before that, said Gilmore, "All the other cats was standing around me doing, 'I don't know 'bout this cat, man — whether he's playin' something'. But when they heard Trane say that, they said 'Aw, this cat, he must be playin' it'."

It was during the Sixties that saxophonists started developing the use of harmonics — false-fingered screams and growls beloved by the rougher r&b players like Bull Moose Jackson or Big Jay McNeely — concentrating on a previously belittled device to give an added dimension to their music. There were sociological reasons for the new element, too — the dirtier the musician played, the more closely he was identifying with his roots, a process that was consciousness-raising for player and his tenor alike. Aesthetically, the approach brought a wealth of new colours to the music. Musicians like Albert Ayler and Pharoah Sanders became especially well known for developing the effect, but no-one ran down the new-old style with such devastating effect and self-assurance as John Gilmore. If anyone could be said to scream "authoritatively", it was him but, being confined to the anonymity of Sun Ra's reed section, he was doomed to relative obscurity for a long time.

In Chicago, Gilmore was known to other saxophonists for the unique approach he developed and the different colouration values he gave to each note. Later, his peers pointed at him as a major influence on Coltrane's change of concept in 1951 but his recognition outside musicians' circles is long overdue. Gilmore's modest, retiring personality hasn't helped, either, although recently Coltrane's

**"I thought—now here I am, ain't got a quarter in my pocket
—and here's John Coltrane asking me to show him my stuff!"**

acknowledgement of his debt has become more widely known.

Sitting in his cluttered room at the Philadelphia house he shares with Sun Ra and other members of the Arkestra, John Gilmore talked about his relationship with Coltrane and the important role Sun Ra played in both their lives. Outside the sun was shining and the summer air rang with raucous greetings and laughter, but in Gilmore's room, the walls spray-painted with mystical patterns in different colours and hung with snapshots from various gigs, the atmosphere was one of total dedication to music. Gilmore's saxophone lay on the bed beside him, oddly naked without its mouthpieces, an open folio of guitar music was propped up on a music-stand. The cupboards bulged with clothes, books on musical and spiritual matters lay everywhere.

Gilmore, born in Mississippi but raised in Chicago from the age of two, speaks slowly in the deep, sonorous tones of the Black Southside. He has a gentleness of expression that belies his ferocious approach to the saxophone. After the set at Birdland, he recalled, Coltrane insisted on an on-the-spot lesson. Understandably, the impovished saxophonist was reluctant. "I thought—now here I am, poor, ain't got a quarter in my pocket—and here's John Coltrane asking me to show him my stuff. I know he's bound to record it and I ain't gonna be recording but I have to think about it from another perspective.

"You see, it's all right for the musicians in New York to be egotistical but not for you. If you're egotistical, they'll put the clamps on you and you won't work anywhere. That's the way the musicians are in New York—you can be ever so good but if they don't like you personally, you won't work. I knew that if I refused, they'd say, 'Oh, he's a big egotist—here's John Coltrane asking him to share his knowledge with him about his horn and he's going to freeze up!' I said No, that wouldn't be wise. So the best thing I could do was to try to show him."

The two musicians went backstage and Gilmore played for a few minutes—"Just a few phrases and a few rhythms"—and Coltrane was impressed. So much so that he was to admit later that he got a lot of ideas for his iconoclastic blues masterpiece, "Chasin' the Trane", from the little demonstration. To the other musicians, though, the connection was common knowledge. As Gilmore put it, "I'd be jamming round somewhere and Sonny Red or someone would come in. He'd say, 'John Gilmore, it's a damn shame. John Coltrane done stole all your stuff behind you'. People would say, 'I hear that little sound he's trying to get that's yours, John. Trane's trying to get that sound you got!' They always thought that I had a unique sound. And they could hear that Trane was trying to get whatever it was."

Gilmore first met Coltrane when the latter was playing with Miles Davis. Ironically, he himself had been the tenor player in a band Davis formed in Chicago before his classic quintet of the Fifties. With Andrew Hill on piano, Wilbur Ware on bass and Phil Thomas on drums, Gilmore and Davis rehearsed frequently. On the opening night of the engagement, though, the trumpeter was incapacitated and the band folded. Davis stayed in Chicago for a month or so to

recuperate and next time he came back, Coltrane was with him.

Gilmore went down to the gig with his horn and asked to sit in. He played accompanied only by Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones while Coltrane listened intently from the side of the stage. Afterwards he told Gilmore, "You have a very nice technique in getting through the horn", but his own efforts were not so well received by the audience.

"At that time Trane was kind of 'out of it,'" says Gilmore. "He was having his drink and drug problems and actually would be searching for a lot of things that he couldn't make on his horn. He had the sketch of what he wanted to do then but he'd be missing a lot of times. The people in Chicago didn't like him too much because they were used to hearing cats make what they try to do—especially around Chicago! But it was really that Trane was searching and he was so untogether in his personal thing—frustrated and whatnot."

Coltrane's search eventually led him, as it had so many other frustrated musicians, to Sun Ra. Pat Patrick, who had known Coltrane since the days when he played alto, called Sun Ra and introduced the two musicians. "Sun Ra played some of his tapes to Trane over the phone and Pat gave Trane some records and some of Sun Ra's philosophy. At that time he used to print little pamphlets and papers instructing people on biblical interpretations and things that they had never thought of."

Coltrane was sufficiently influenced by Sun Ra's ideas on self-determination to curtail his alcohol and narcotics intake. "He gave up all his vices and came out playing like a champ!" recalls Gilmore. "I heard the record and I said, 'Who is that? That the same cat that was with Miles?' And he was cooking like he really wasn't the same cat. From that point on he was aware of the band and he kept track of its movements."

Later in New York, some time after the Birdland session, Gilmore went to hear Coltrane at the Jazz Gallery. "I've listened to a lot of folks, I've borrowed a lot of ideas from folks, but you're the only one that I never get tired of the way you play," Coltrane told him. "I never get tired of trying to investigate what you're doing. After a while, I just drops the other things and throws it to one side but your stuff I still dig." Shortly after, Gilmore saw him at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem. Coltrane told he he was going to come along to an Arkestra rehearsal but when he turned up, only Gilmore and fellow reedman Marshall Allen were there, running through ideas with the rhythm section.

"He talked and wanted to look at my bass clarinet," says Gilmore. "He didn't know I played bass clarinet and he stayed around about an hour or two. And from then on, I'd just be seeing him every now and then but we didn't have too many long conversations except for night before he died."

The last occasion the two saxophonists' paths crossed was when the Arkestra was playing in Brooklyn. They had just finished playing when Coltrane turned up, disappointed to have missed his music. He sat in the car with Gilmore and some others, talking about music and fingering a Japanese stringed instrument Sun Ra had bought for Gilmore. Then he went in to the club to talk to the leader. "He told him that the ideas he had been getting from the cosmos weren't coming



At home in Philadelphia

any more. He used to just pick up his horn and didn't have to do nothing, the ideas would just come. He'd just blow and it would come out but it had stopped coming like that. Well, he had hired Pharoah Sanders along that period and a lot of people were under the impression that Pharoah was even playing a little bit more than he was—at least they were saying that, the general public. Pharoah had the edge on him in a sense because he had investigated our music personally when he took my place one time, so actually he did have more experience night out of the Sun Ra school than Trane did. So that would make him superior in that line of playing because Trane started playing like that late. Plus Pharoah used to listen to us every night when we were playing on Fifth Street. He used to be there every night because he was a waiter."

Gilmore says Coltrane was disturbed that his popularity was falling off. Sun Ra told him "Well, Trane, if you lose your ideas, all the young fellows are going to outplay you. The best thing for you to do, since you've actually been watching the group and siphoning what few ideas you can and inspiration from all these years, what you should do is to come over and rehearse with the group and record with us. It'd be good for you spiritually and it would help the group name-wise and



VAL WINTERGARTH

financially, too, from the prestige of having Coltrane record with us."

Coltrane reportedly agreed and suggested that he donate some money to the Arkestra, too. "But," says Gilmore, "he went right out and donated the money to Olatunji instead and he never did come to rehearsal. And he died about a week or two later."

John Gilmore's musical education started, as it did for so many Black Chicago musicians, when he became a student of Du Sable High. The Musical Director there was the legendary "Capt." Walter Dyett, whose earlier pupils included such heavyweight saxophonists as Gene Ammons, Clifford Jordan and Johnny Griffin. Among Gilmore's fellow students were pianist Andrew Hill (then playing mellophone), violinist Leroy Jenkins (who was playing alto and flute), bassist Richard Davis, trumpeter Paul Serrano and several other Sun Ra associates — Pat Patrick, bassist Ronnie Boykins, Robert Barry (the Arkestra's first drummer), and tympanist Jim Herndon.

Dyett's secret, says Gilmore, lay in recognising the best musicians despite any adverse personal behaviour. "The ones who couldn't play too much, he didn't bother them. But, boy, if you could play, he'd stay on your case! He was an excellent conductor — he could hear around the corners — very sharp,

good musician. He knew who was going to play and who wasn't and he knew who was in it just for the glamour or looking at the horn or saying, 'Look! I'm in the band!'. He knew which ones were actually going to be musicians the minute they came in the band."

In keeping with Gilmore's reserved nature, he was a dedicated student although, not to be outdone by the wild ones, he stresses that he would sometimes "sneak and do my little dirt, too!". He recalls with glee how Dyett once caught him trying to climb through a bus window to make sure of a seat: "He caught me and slapped the daylight out of me!". By and large, though, he was quiet, spending most of his time studying. "Once I really got into liking the clarinet, I'd spend six, eight hours on it. That's all I did. So I didn't have too much time to do anything else outside."

During Gilmore's military service (1946–52), he played the clarinet. When he came back to Chicago, he worked for a while with the Earl Hines Orchestra, then, together with Robert Barry, continued his studies with George Eskridge, a guitarist who was responsible for helping other Chicagoans like trombonist Julian "Nester" and saxophonist Charles Davis with chord voicings and solo construction.

In 1953, Barry was working in a trio with Sun Ra. He invited Gilmore down to sit in and he was hired the following night. "Working in clubs with a small trio there's not too much you can do but play standards," he says. "Sun Ra was playing things like 'Out of Nowhere' and 'I Can't Get Started' but he'd slip one of his tunes in every now and then. He had one — I'll never forget it — that was 'Saturn'. It was so odd and he slipped that one on me. Well, I could read, so I read it, but it took me a long time to hear the intervals and stuff of his music."

"Saturn" became, and remains, one of Gilmore's featured numbers with the Arkestra. A recording, on the Delmark *Sound of Joy* album, features one of his most notable recorded solos but it was not easy for the young saxophonist to assimilate Sun Ra's advanced concept. Nevertheless, "After I heard what I was playing, I said, 'Wow! This cat is writing some intervals out of this world'. I'd never heard anybody write like that before but it just came to me one night, I heard what he was doing, I heard the beauty in it and the advanced intervals, and I knew there wasn't any need for me to go any further."

Gilmore's earliest influence was a saxophonist named Melvin Scott. He persuaded Gilmore's mother to buy her son a clarinet, reasoning that he would be a better saxophone player if he learned the smaller instrument first. When he started playing, the first records to make an impact on him were Lester Young's "D.B. Blues", Dexter Gordon's "Dexter Digs In", Coleman Hawkins's "Disorder at the Border" and, of course, anything by Charlie Parker.

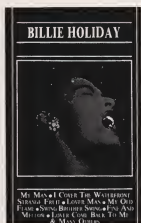
Rollins influenced him later — even Stan Getz during his Army days — but Young, he says, remains as good today as ever, "with his beautiful choice notes and everything. Him and Coleman Hawkins — those records are still as fresh" — Gilmore's sheer power and harmonic inventiveness can be heard on such recordings as "Dancing Shadows" from *Nothing Is (ESP)*, the now unobtainable "Rocket Number Nine Take Off for the Planet Venus" from *Secrets of the Sun* on the Arkestra's own Saturn label, where he plays a lengthy collective improvisation with other members of the reed section.

Gilmore first experimented with harmonics in the Army and it was this concept that had such an effect on players like Coltrane, Aylmer and Sanders. He usually jumps in first, screaming and yelling on the instrument with apparent ease where others sweat and strain. Then he will weave this way and that, phrasing slyly and lending totally different colours to every note. In earlier times, said Gilmore, musicians like Young and Gordon would play the odd scream but never used the idea extensively. "They used what you call 'false-fingering', 'fake-fingering', where you play the same note and it gets a little different effect because of the change of fingering; the embouchure isn't changed too much."

Gilmore credits Sun Ra with developing his consciousness to the point where such ideas flowed freely. "Just playing his music opened up my ears to the different potentials of intervals that I had never dreamed existed. Even if you weren't conscious of it, that would have to be going on, anyway, just from me practising his music all the time. It would have

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to have that influence on me — eers and spirit and everything." When Gilmore first started playing with Sun Ra, the leader was pioneering the concept of two drummers playing together. Robert Barry and his students, Bugs Cochrane or Jim Herndon, often played in tandem and the introduction of Herndon's instrument, the tympani, was not only an innovation, it was to influence Max Roach to record with other orchestral drums. Sun Ra has always concerned himself with drums, what he calls "the roots of the music", and is partially responsible for influencing so many groups to add other percussion in the Siles. Gilmore found the experience a rewarding one.

"If you listen to a record, you can't tell there's two on there because Robert Barry and Bugs Cochrane, they play so well together. There's no ego thing like, 'I'll outdo you', it's very nice. If you have egotistical cats that want to outplay each other, you get confusion in the rhythm section."

Later, Gilmore started playing drums himself. Clifford Jarvis, the band's regular drummer, kept his drums set up at East Third Street when the Arkestra was living in New York. Whenever he went out, Gilmore practised surreptitiously. Jarvis often had paying gigs elsewhere so would take his drums with him. Eventually Sun Ra decided to buy Gilmore a drum-kit and he started playing regularly with the band. "When Clifford Jarvis would come in late, we'd already be playing. He'd come in, slinging his drums around — mad — and I just got into the habit of playing. If we had a drummer and there was any doubt that he would not take care of business, I'd be in there to bolster him. At least I knew the rhythms that are proper, even if I couldn't play them. I knowed 'em better than the average cat because if he hadn't been playing with us, there was no way he could know the rhythms." The Arkestra's recording of "My Brother the Wind" features Gilmore's drumming.

With the exophony of one year taken off to play with Art Blakey, Gilmore has stayed with the Arkestra since his first meeting with the leader. Despite periods of public inactivity, it has been, he says, an immensely rewarding experience. He went on tour with Blakey because he was frustrated at not receiving personal recognition. Whenever he went out to hear music, it seemed to him that other players were thriving off his ideas.

The band was looked on as a unit and that was all. Sun Ra gets all the credit for the band and that's the way it should be but when I'm walking around poor, got no money, got nothing, I said damn! I had to get out and let someone know I was playing. And I think it was meant, in a way, because I served the purpose of introducing Sun Ra to Europe and Japan. I brought a box of our records on Saturn with me and I passed them out. And they were the first records that got over there."

The secret of Sun Ra's success is that whether the gigs arrive or not, the band plays together almost every day. The dedication of men like saxophonists Marshall Allen and Gilmore is revealing — in Chicago, Gilmore recalls missing only twelve rehearsals in two years.

"If you rehearse every day for a week, it'll be different music every night," he says. "And if we rehearsed every day for a year, it'd be the same. That night there would keep a cat



On the street with the boss man

from getting tired. With a limited repertoire like most of the bands have, after playing the same thing for a year, they get tired. Sun Ra's music is always fresh. In fact, I'd say that we play some of our most beautiful things at rehearsals — they ain't never been heard and never will be heard. Just to watch rehearsals is informative because there's a lot more information there than there ever is at a performance. A lot of things we never will play out because the same musicians don't always make the gigs. You rehearse with a bunch of people, then fifteen other dudes come in from some place else!"

Sun Ra's energy level is legendary. Despite the fact that he is well into his sixties, the leader survives on cat-naps and expects the other musicians to keep up with him.

"He runs us into the ground!" laughs Gilmore. "We'll come in from a place like Baltimore, everybody else hit the bed but he stays up, goes in the studio, practising. We'll be rehearsing for twelve hours sometimes and he may take a nod, you know, but he'll wake up right on the passage. Keeping up is hard. I've been moving pretty fast but you have to be sort of on the same vibe to keep up. You have to be studying and that takes a certain amount of discipline."

Although many musicians come to Sun Ra to learn and benefit from the intensive musical experience he has to offer, not all of them are equal to his rigorous demands. "After a while, they realise that if they want to stay, they have to form their life around what he expects," says Gilmore. "Plus, you have to be ready to rehearse at any hour, so that means you can't go to New York or New Jersey or somewhere to see a girl or something like that. You have to consult him first and see what he's got going on."

The Arkestra still works infrequently and when they do, Sun Ra is said to be pretty mean about finances. His attitude follows the line that poverty keeps musicians on their toes but not everyone welcomes that. Restrictions on personal relationships are another matter, however — small wonder one man likened the Arkestra to the Army. Some musicians do have family responsibilities but, by and large, says Gilmore, those with children avoid the Arkestra. "Now and then, though, some cats with children do come and he helps them and

helps their women, too. If women are with us, they get the same consideration as everybody else. Women are looked upon with respect and they travel right along with the band — unless they try to start some trouble in the organisation and he might have to let them go."

Nevertheless, when the Arkestra hits town, the impression is not that of the usual touring band, accompanied by friends and lovers. It has been rumoured that Sun Ra considers that women will have a destructive influence on his "family", a notion that Gilmore partially repudiates. "If they're sincere and have the musician's interests at heart, that's OK, but if they want to deprive him of his talent and stop him from playing, he's got to look at it that way because his main interest is in keeping his band together. If it's the type of woman who be planning and scheming to get you a day-job — like, 'I think they're hiring at the Post Office, aren't they?' ... and I could do a little something on the side' — they have women like that. They like the man but they don't like the music and the dues that have to be paid with it, and that's all he guards against. And, plus, there's rehearsals — he don't want no woman keeping musicians from rehearsals. When it's time to rehearse, and if you have a date, you just have to cancel."

Gilmore agrees that there have been occasions when he has felt restricted, but in the long run, because of what the musicians have been able to accomplish as a unit, such discipline is positive. "When you look at it, it's hard but it makes sense. It could be no other way if you want to do your best for the music. He's created a certain standard on a high level and you have to keep on rehearsing to keep that music up there. It's no good to come out with sloppy performances."

Sun Ra's discipline and the sense of dedication he instills in his musicians has been beneficial in matters other than music itself. As Gilmore explained, "There have been members in this band who've been out of it and they've completely recuperated. There was one drummer — a girl ruined him so bad psychologically that he was like a vegetable. He couldn't even sit on the drums. I said, 'Sunny, we can't use this cat no more'. Day after day, he'd be in there, messing up the rehearsal. But after about a month, a month and a half, he was playing. Now, Pharaoh Sanders is no dummy — he's had a little kidney problem, and whenever he sees us, you see him pick up his horn and play with us. I don't care where it is, he's delighted. He knows that it's just good vibes and good luck to stay in tune with Sun Ra."

"It could have worked the same way with Trane. His whole history could have been changed if he had done what he said he was going to do. Coming over to Sun Ra would have energised him to the point where he could have recuperated from whatever ailment he had."

Despite the continuing lack of adequate financial reward, Gilmore feels that playing Sun Ra's music has made his life worth while. "What we've been doing is of benefit to the people. Some people listen to the music and it helps them. It's got a lot of happiness and love in it, not sadness and gravity — Sun Ra's not about that. It's been highly rewarding."

This article first appeared in Jazz Magazine (Paris) and subsequently in Melody Maker ■



THE MAN

Herbie Nichols Out Of The Shadow

GREG MURPHY

**takes a listen to
the still-neglected
pianist and composer
whose posthumous
fame is growing
by the year.**

"I CAN'T get work because I don't act weird, don't clown around enough. You have to be a freak to get a gig nowadays." That was how Herbie Nichols, a pianist and composer of consummate skill and imagination, summed up his everyday experience. Nichols was a detached man, one of intellectual tastes, with interests in literature, poetry, the dance and African cultures. An avid chess player, he also knew his music in encyclopedic proportions, including European composers from Scarlatti to Bartok, and the differing nature of American jazz piano was second nature to him.

But such a personality does not fit in with the wheeler-dealer nature of employment in jazz, and so it was with Nichols. His recordings are, in relative terms, a mere handful—a double for Blue Note (a reissue of two ten-inch and one twelve-inch), four titles on a Savoy album, one for Bethlehem and an odd appearance on a mainstream album led by trumpeter Joe Thomas. Yet his work was sophisticated but accessible, music that stretches the imagination with the lasting quality—once heard, it demands repeated listening.

So who was Herbie Nichols? He was born in New York City of West Indian parentage on March 1, 1919. His uncle, Walter Nichols, was a trumpeter and Herbie studied music assiduously, and by the age of thirty-five had mastered more piano music than most would hear in a lifetime. He spent two years in the Army between 1941 and 1943 and then became an associate of Thelonious Monk; but unlike Monk, Nichols did not gain recognition

WHO MADE THE THIRD WORLD

for his composing. Instead he began a round of ademan jobs, with bands led by Snub Mosley, Rex Stewart, Milt Larkins and innumerable rhythm and blues outfits. It was 1952 before he had the chance to record under his own name, in a quartet for the small Hi-Lo label, later absorbed by Savoy. After that, three years were to pass before he recorded for Blue Note, which remains the main body of his work, before a final session for Bethlehem in 1957. Then it was back to the usual round of small group jobs, and it is one of these, in the band of Joe Thomas, that appears as part of an Atlantic album – ironically, this record represents the everyday Nichols in the bread and butter sense, and it was his last recorded appearance. Nichols died of leukaemia in New York in April of 1963. He was forty-four.

The definitive essay on Nichols is indisputably that in A.B. Spellman's book *Four Lives in the Bebop Business* (McGibbon and Kew), and it was this that did much to awaken interest in Nichols' work. Not that this was much benefit to the pianist, who had died by the publication of the book. One of the foremost admirers of Nichols was the trombonist Roswell Rudd; Rudd encountered Nichols at a loft session and then found himself in the same pick-up group. From there, the relationship grew, with Rudd becoming a firm friend. Often the two would play Nichols' music, which the pianist had scored for trombone – Rudd recalls in his affectionate sleeve note for the Blue Note reissue how Nichols was delighted at Rudd's improvising attempts on the pianist's music,

despite the self-admitted musical breakdown by the trombonist. The point is that Nichols was delighted to hear his music played by something other than a piano, and after that Rudd would persuade Archie Shepp and Steve Swallow to the sessions, which resulted in Nichols writing a piece specially for Shepp.

Herbie Nichols' music is really a subdivision of the jazz mode. It cannot be directly compared to anyone else, although Nichols had his roots in the bop era. The distinction is that Nichols did not become stuck in the achievements of bop, as did so many others, but saw his music as having a meticulous progression. His background had much to do with his outlook, as witness his own view – "Think of what can be done with the sounds of the multiple counterpoint of Hindemith, the neo-classic polytonality of Shostakovich and Piston and the melting of the vast musical devices which Bartok loved to use at random and which makes his kaleidoscopic style come closest to jazz." From this it's easy to see that Nichols' compositions ran against the tide of popular appeal, despite their symmetrical balance of theme and variations and lack of eccentricity. The most outstanding feature is the use of tempo and the tightly contained figures of the right hand, and while the left hand follows the bop tradition of spare injected notes, there is more left hand in Nichols' music than in the bop (or even post-bop) norm. Nichols was fortunate to have fine drummers on his own recordings – Art Blakey, Max Roach and Danny Richmond were ideal for the rhythmic sonorities that were such a part of Nichols' music. Yet his

main ambition was to have his music orchestrated and played by a band, something that was not to happen in his lifetime. Now, twenty-two years after his death, it is finally coming about.

The pianist Misha Mengelberg has been taking an interest in Nichols' music, and there are tapes of concerts by the Instant Composers Pool with Mengelberg and Steve Lacy in existence. The possibilities of compositions such as "The Gig" in orchestrated form are almost endless, and there is a suggestion of an album on Black Saint of Nichols' music in this form. If the first tapes are a guide, the record should be one of the jazz events of 1985.

In the meantime, there are still Nichols' own recordings, but even these may now have to be searched for. The four 1952 sides were on *The Modern Jazz Piano Album* (Savoy SJL2247), whilst the quintessential Blue Note of 1955/56 are on *The Third World* (Blue Note BNLA 485 H2). Easier to find is the Bethlehem session, available as *Out Of The Shadow* (Affinity AFF90). If you're in a mood to search the used racks, Nichols in his working mood can be heard, albeit sparingly, on *Mainstream* – Joe Thomas and Vic Dickenson (London SAHK 6066). There is a wealth of inspirational music to be heard, and one wonders if one of Nichols' Blue Note sides had the chords of "It Could Happen to Me" in mind – the Nichols version is called "It Didn't Happen".

Ironically autobiographical. It's high time that it did happen. ♦

D A N I E L

"We are the Cubans/Who've come to invade you. We are the Cubans/Who've come to tell you this/This groove is tough/This groove is not like yesterday's." — "Invasión de 80."

THOSE DEFIANTLY ironic lyrics by Orlando "Puntillo" Ríos introduce Daniel Ponce's first album, *New York Now*, with the humour and confidence typical of the latest wave of Cubans to arrive in America. The record, released in 1983, reflects three years of a new life for Daniel Ponce and the other featured Cubans after their expulsion. Cuba called these people 'undesirables'; the US media dubbed them 'delinquents'. The way Daniel sees it, they were 'simply' musicians for whom the imitations of Cuba were ill-fitting.

"Everybody felt restricted musically," he said, in this interview, his first conversation with the media about his life back home. "You didn't have the freedom to play what you wanted. If you weren't 'politically integrated' you were an 'undesirable'. Before I came here, I played in the beach clubs with five people: two dancers and three percussionists. We played the whole spectrum of Cuban dances: rumba, danzon, son, for one hour at Guanamo Beach. Not for the public — this show was for tourists." The frustration he felt is almost audible in the unleashing of his expansive, dizzying improvisations.

It is difficult to prise apart the web of propaganda surrounding Cuba. First-hand stories conflict with each other; anti-Communist journalists in New York say musicians don't have instruments or access to playing, and the formerly vibrant streets are empty of music; sympathetic visitors bring back records (with the thinnest covers but excellent music inside) and stories of cafe entertainers, street parties and rumbas in the market squares of Havana. The exiled musicians are predictably contradictory and confusing. Most, including Daniel and even the Queen of Cuban music, Celia Cruz, who left over 20 years ago, are still cautious because of their families.

Celia still records songs like "Yo Regresare" (I will return), laced with homesickness. Daniel Ponce, like most Cubans in the US, simultaneously derides and criticises — and defends — the way of life there — especially its music. The name of Castro (who Ponce calls Santa Claus) induces hearty, cynical laughter and scathing comments about the effects of his policies, especially the ban on imported records — which isn't his doing anyway. But in the top pocket of his orange sports shirt is a cassette

of Havana's top hits, a remarkably traditional collection of songs, including Los Van Van's beautiful charanga "Havana no aguenta mas" (Havana can't take any more [people]) which has recently been arranged in London by Stan Rivera for his salsa outfit, Sonido de Londres.

For Daniel, as for most Cubans, this music is "absolutely superior" to other brands of Latin music, especially those sold as 'salsa' in New York and Latin America. Daniel does not even accept the word 'salsa'; to him it is just a hot sauce. "It's OK as a name," he grudgingly admitted, but then after a passionate rant about Cuban music's superiority, he retrieved a piece of paper from his pocket, hummed a guaguanco rhythm, and sang a verse of his song, "National Call" ("Llamada nacional"), which describes what he really thinks: "Salsa doesn't interest me, my rhythm is called son. The guaracha is Cuban, and it's a tremendous barcelon (gasm) I'm bringing news of what you ought to know, I only think of salsa when I sit down to eat!"

Verna Gillis, Daniel's manager who acted as translator for this interview, remembers when the Cuban emigrants first came to her 52nd Street club, Soundscape: "When the Cubans arrived in New York, they all said 'Yuk! This is old music.' Daniel explained, 'I was expecting to find a stronger Latin scene here; the lyrics, the composition, the feeling are not adventurous. Listen to 1960 Tito Puente or Machito and then listen to today. It's different names, but the music and the feelings and arrangements aren't changed. It's a good sound and they're masters, but right now it's necessary for the new generation to make a new sound.'"

So, does he see himself as the maker of this new sound? "First of all, I don't want to have to be a hero of the Latin community and do that. But it will happen, someone has to do it."

At first, the Cuban arrivals shook up the Latin community. Verna Gillis's club became, in her words, "a kind of Cuban culture centre". Tuesdays were given over to Afro-Cuban Nights; jam sessions which lasted half the night, drew audiences which included Tito Puente, Hispanic couples and members of the avant garde improvisation scene including a then relatively unknown bass player from Material, Bill Laswell. Reviews at the time quote Jerry Gonzalez as saying "For me, the Afro-Cuban evening is a workshop where I can put chemicals together. I can preserve the old, and work on the new." From those evenings new conglomerates were formed, new ideas, fusing Cuban rhythms with New York's already rich meld of Afro-Caribbean influences.

They also led to the partnership between Laswell, now the producer for Celluloid records, and Daniel Ponce — who has become the in-house conga player. He adds a human foil to the electronic precision. Hardly any of Ponce's recordings have been within the Latin

community. His fast-changing career has no equal within the community today, though there are similarities between his various musical contexts and the similarly schizophrenic careers of two other Cuban percussionists: Sabu Martinez and Chano Pozo, who slipped effortlessly (musically at least) between Afro-American dance music and jazz, in the bands of Dizzy Gillespie and Art Blakey. In the last five years, Daniel Ponce has worked with Nona Hendryx, Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, Mick Jagger, Laurie Anderson, Defunkt, Material, Yellowman and Kip Hanrahan; currently he's working with Yoko Ono.

Partly as a result of his involvement with the rising fortunes of Laswell, but partly also because he was in the right place at the right time with the right skill, Ponce's conga playing has become an essential colouring of the most progressive rock/dance and fusion albums. The non-Latin market has always extracted ideas from Cuban music (the thesis of John Storm Roberts' book, *The Latin Tinge*). Today's popular and dance music producers reach to African and Caribbean sources too. Ponce's playing, rooted in the traditional religious and secular drumming of West Africa, is a most appropriate addition to the electronic framework.

Daniel Ponce has managed the impossible: to straddle both his own close-knit community and to make money out of working with rock legends. His position within the Hispanic community is somewhat ambiguous as a result: it's a relatively small world, marginalised and ostracised, and consequently fired by intense competition. Standards are predictably high. Conga 'cutting contests' used to be fashionable, both as a showbiz stunt, and also as a showcase for the hardest hands and the fittest fingers. Percussionists still watch each other out of the corners of their eyes, checking for speed and dexterity as well as embroidery.

The arrival of this young, muscular man who wears baseball hats and chews gum and looks more American in five years than many Latin New Yorkers achieve in a lifetime, set some players on guard. Some, it is said, will not appear on the same bill. Most like some of all, Daniel Ponce plays his clutch of four or five waist-high conga drums like he was born to, making them sound like a conga orchestra, synchronised in heaven, and creating a crispness and clarity which his big hands would seem to deny. But there is more behind the rivalry than Daniel's playing and improvisational skills.

The rivalry between Cubans and other Latin Americans is complex. Salsa is based in Afro-Cuban music, played and developed mostly by Puerto Ricans in New York. It revolves around a nebulous rhythmic formula known as 'clave', though Daniel Ponce would find the word 'nebulous' derisive. To him —

HISPANIC STATIONS

P O N C E

and to all Cubans—clave is a tangible, absolute structure which governs their music. "The clave is for me my time, in every kind of music I play, my framework." John Storm Roberts defines it as "an offset 3/2 or 2/3 rhythm pattern over two bars . . . into which every arrangement and improvisation should fit . . . the common 3/2 Cuban clave varies in accentuation according to the rhythm being played." You can usually hear it on the hollow-sounding wood blocks, the claves, a simple beat which anchors the other instruments' complex and engled beat breakdowns. Verna Gittis explained that most Cuban musicians have their own sense of clave, almost like an accent. "They go crazy around clave, and people not sticking to it."

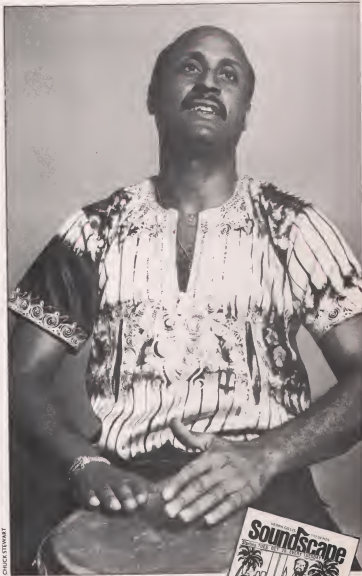
I asked Willie Colon about clave. He is Puerto Rican, the trombonist, composer and arranger who changed the shape and balance of salsa in the Seventies through his productions, particularly those with Hector Lavoe, Celia Cruz and Ruben Blades. "The idea of clave used to make me cringe," he admitted. "I don't know if music and art should deal in absolutes like that, so I purposely used to write stuff that would go in and out of clave. It would make the musicians' socks go up and down! I know it's a basic rule but I wouldn't die by it—I feel I have to break it, I'll break it."

For Daniel Ponce, clave is like a faith which infuses all music he hears. He can hear clave in classical music. "It's a little difficult in classical music, but it's good. You can put in six or eight bata drums (the double-ended waisted Cuban drums formerly used in religious ceremonies) Classical music plays in space, bata plays in time. I played in Cuba, in the Symphony Orchestra, three bata drums with Beethoven. Wow!"

He hears it in African pop music, in Sunny Ade and Franco. "The influence of Cuba in African music is strong. In Senegal and Nigeria, they play son, the Fifties and Sixties Cuban music. They listen to jazz and rock, but play 'African son'—what's changed is the harmonics."

Part of Daniel Ponce's freshness lies in his enthusiasm for the new music he finds himself surrounded by. "The combination of African, Cuban and every country in the world is terrific. I like playing anything, not just Cuban. Funk I love, but my favourite at the moment is 'rock' (Nona Hendryx, Michael Jackson). The instruments of Cuba together with rock makes a very good and different sound."

There's a danger that Ponce's exceptional outward-looking attitude will squeeze him out from the Latin community and into rock's arms exclusively. For him, there's no such problem with straddling these two worlds. With musicians like Willie Colon and Ruben Blades moving towards a pan-Latin musical identity, this is the shape of Latin music to come, and Daniel Ponce seems set to be one of the central characters in the new epoch.



CHUCK STEWART

In this exclusive New York interview, SUE STEWARD raps the Cuban rubric with the cat who's beating the drum for real Latin music.



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ON THE RECORD

Paladin's Cave

THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

IF PALADIN was 'that' sort of label, they would be telling us how they feel that the concept of Paladin was currently being fulfilled and that it is making a natural progression towards a complete artistic statement.

Paladin is not that sort of label. Paladin is doing this "for the crack".

Paladin in effect started when Paul Murphy secured himself his own site at a tiny shop in Kings Cross' Exmouth Market, a real cubby hole that people found increasingly valuable as a source of unknown deleted gems and new releases.

The shop was Murphy realising his vocation of bringing the music to the people (heaving started off by simply spinning it at them in clubs), and as the idea and sales began to expand so did the need for shelf space. So Murphy upped his skirts and set up in the basement of Record Shack, soul importers in the middle of Berwick Street.

It was there that Paladin became a co-partnership when Dean Hume, a young South Londoner who was at the time "between employment", began to make himself invaluable in the running of the venture. With his steady hand steering the powerboat appeal of a jazz record shop that operated like a soul import outfit, Paladin Records became a very viable business concern.

So, with the cash, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of a record label, and this ambition was realised in the summer of 1983 with the release of a brand new Pazz album, *Look Inside* and the debut release of Dave Bittell's *Onward International*, a three-track twelve inch that received heavy night club support.

It was with this initial success – and the tasty carrot of Simon Booth's new band *Working Week* and their demo of the jazz-dance anthem "Venceremos", enticingly available – that encouraged Virgin Records to take in and offer Paladin the deal that would take them to the next phase: national distribution and promotion on a major scale.

After some precarious toting and froting that saw *Working Week* split from Paladin and securing their own deal with Virgin (simply down to a clash of titanic ideals between Booth and Murphy), the two labels settled down into some form of understanding and, with the addition of Martin Poole as a regular third member of the team, have just released their first batch of albums and singles.

It was with these new releases safely tucked under their belt that I met "the voice of reason and sanity" (as their note paper proclaims), Dean Hume, at the office just off Piccadilly and chatted with him about the three fetters' desires for their growing offspring.

First Dean explained how the label will not be totally synonymous with straightahead jazz releases but will, if the game plan goes well, finance the making of records of that ilk with more commercial platters – a Robin Hood tactic of unloading Peter to pay Paul. It is

MARK WEBSTER chews over the problems of bringing jazz to a young audience with label bosses Dean Hume and Paul Murphy.

because of this that, as Dean says, they want success like every label wants it.

"Of course I'd like to have million sellers – I love going on holiday. In fact, I'd like two-million sellers so I can have two holidays!"

"When I tell people we want to be a commercial label, I don't mean in the sense of having a Duran Duran or a Wham! – I mean I think we can have success by putting out good records by brilliant musicians and make those records commercial."

"We're not some arty company, we don't receive grants and subsidies, we're a business and we want to be a successful one – but not by totally compromising our output."

"If one of our acts can put out a great twelve inch that does well, then it's good for them, it's bloody marvellous for us and it's great for someone like, say, Harry Beckett because we can go to him with the money to cut a jazz album."

"The bread and butter will be our single releases but the jam is the albums".

And that, I can assure you, from the Paladin boys is the closest you'll get in terms of corporate jargon. Dean lightened the atmosphere by adding, "But let's be honest, I make no bones – this, all of this record business stuff, is one big crack. If we sell lots of records, that's a double crack".

... AND THEIR FAVOURS

THE FIRST wave of Paladin releases are as varied a bunch as you would ever care to meet on a dark night.

The initial impact came from the twelve inch release by trombonist Annie Whitehead (PALS 100), an instrumental *Two Tone/Blue* beat affair called "Alien Style" that paid tribute to the sterling work she has offered to pop acts like Jerry Dammers, Smiley Culture and Fun Boy Three and a record that picked up reciprocal night club response for the Latin/fusion flyer on the B-side, "Mambo 111".

Paladin's singles complement has since been supplemented with a pair of releases very strong in their own fields. Well Red's "Limit Of Your Loving" (PALS 101) is this recently formed trio's first attempt at combining a heavily commercial funk beat with the understated appeal of lovers rock melodies and reggae production techniques. If this game plan doesn't come off first time for

Richard Stevens, Alun Lene and Lorenzo Hell, it's a formula that is bound to catch on in the end.

Its fellow Teurean was "Pull Me Up" (PALS 102), a delightfully catchy bare bones affair executed by voice, harmonica, bass and throbbing conga, and the first single from a quartet called *Seconds Of Pleasure*; an outfit that began with the voice of Jennifer Geraghty and mouth organ of Richard Earls, was soon percussively supplemented by the upright bass of Chris Spurrell and made whole with the addition of Will Parnell's conga. The Annie Whitehead-produced release strikes a balance between quality and novelty that both the band and their label would be wise not to forget.

The jam comes in the shape of a pair of albums from two veteran jazz performers, trumpeter Harry Beckett and drummer Tommy Chase. Harry Beckett's *Pictures Of You* (PAL2) is an album encompassing moods from the poignant ballad "Pictures Of You" (sung with feel and promise by Leroy Osborne) through straightahead affairs like "In Cese You Hadn't Heard Mrs. Smith Is Here" and on to free-blown work-outs like "One Step Ahead". Lots of different jazz and not a funky bass in hearing distance.

Tommy Chase has never heard of funky base lines. Funky bass lines would take one look around the door, exclaim "this place ain't for me, Jack" and hip-hop down the road. On *Drive* (PALS), Tommy takes his young quartet through their paces with relentless gusto; a powerhouse session of drumming that draws Alan Barnes' sax, Mark Fitzgibbon's piano and Alex Dankworth's bass along for a hell of a ride without giving them the option of the back seat. Listen to Tommy lead from behind with classic pop like the title track, "Love For Sale" and "Straight Edge".

Paladin have also taken on the role of big daddy by picking up the Washington-based Jam releases for UK distribution; a deal that has seen the materialisation of a pair of admittedly lame-duck fusion sets from Les McCann (a live set called *Musx Box*, PAL3) and Phil Upchurch (*Compensons*, PAL4), the latter of which does happen to carry a choice blues number called "See See Rider" featuring Jimmy Witherspoon.

Paladin is a young company with young ideas. It is a product of a new jazz age that has seen teenagers turn to virtuosic musicians for their musical entertainment and it is a label that reflects the cluttered, clean feel that this young market has for the music. As Dean says, "People ask us deep questions, the in's and out's of a duck's behind about the music."

"It's good. It's just good. That's all we know or care" ●





JAN PERSON

the GENIUS of brother ray

On the eve of Ray Charles' latest visit to London, NICK KIMBERLEY reassesses the greatest work of one of the major performers in black music — from Florida Playboy to USA For Africa cheerleader.

FOR SOME, Ray Charles represents the inevitably destructive effect white showbiz values will have on the most successful black musicians. For others, he represents the resilience of blues, gospel, soul, jazz — no matter how great the changes, no matter how many Coke ads he does, there is The Ray behind it all, still marvellously himself.

Charles won't do what we think he should. He's happy to be led on to the stage by Reagan, to pledge his support for the Pres. He apparently enjoys over-acting his way, alongside the superstars, through the USA For Africa video. Crumbs off the table, indeed. And when he writes his autobiography *Brother Ray* (written with David Ritz), he talks more about fucking than about making music.

Not surprisingly, this offends our sense of musical propriety. We look for one authentic, essential Ray Charles located in one authentic, essential black music tradition. If Charles doesn't fit, it's either because he's The Genius (the title of one of his '50s LPs, and the cause of many of the problems), or because he's an inveterate dabbler, never getting to the heart of the music.

The story goes like this: in the late '40s, Ray struggled to find his identity, beginning by imitating the smooth cocktail blues of Nat Cole and Charles Brown. In the '50s, at Atlantic, he miraculously fused r&b and gospel sounds to lay the foundations for soul music. When he left Atlantic in 1959, he joined ABC where he had a couple of years of solid soul hits before, in 1962, he recorded Don Gibson's "I Can't Stop Loving You". This hugely successful brush with country and western was the kiss of death. Ray's extravagant eclecticism took over, and the rest is oblivion. There's much truth here, of course, but plenty of distortion.

The complications begin before Ray Charles even entered a recording studio. In his autobiography, he remembers his early fondness for very disparate musics: as a child, "I can't recall a single Saturday night... when I didn't listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio... I could hear what they were doing and appreciate the feeling behind it... At the

same time I didn't lose interest in the big white bands — Dorsey and Miller and Goodman and Krupa and Shaw... I also knew all the white singers... Bing Crosby, Dick Haynes, Vaughn Monroe." There's little that's surprising here — after all, there were no black radio stations at the time.

What is surprising is that Charles should, while still a teenager, play an active part in white music. In 1948, a slip of a lad at eighteen, he was playing piano in a white hillbilly band called the Florida Playboys. If only the Playboys had recorded with Ray — but no such luck, musical history is never so obliging.

After his mother died in 1945, Ray left small-town Greenville, Florida, to go to big-city Jacksonville, where he started playing in bands — still only fifteen years old. Working the circuits after the war was hard; it meant playing white clubs, and playing what white audiences wanted. Ray was happy to expand his repertoire in whatever direction was needed: "The more tunes I knew, the better off I was."

Shortly after working with the Florida Playboys, Ray moved to Seattle. Spotted in a talent show (this is showbiz history, remember), he was asked to form a trio to play at the Elks Club. He recruited Gosady McGee (guitar) and Milt Garrad (bass) and named the group the McSon Trio — from McGee and Robinson, his given surname. Or at least, Ray says the group was the McSon Trio — most history books call it the Maxm Trio.

The group was successful enough to attract Jack Lauderdale, a Los Angeles record distributor with labels of his own — Swing Time and Downbeat. Lauderdale's specialty was West Coast bluesmen like Lowell Fulson, Lloyd Glenn, Charles Brown, Jimmy McCracklin, whose music was nowhere near as nervily jagged as the contemporary Chicago blues we're more familiar with.

This was the period of the "sepia Sinatras", singers like Cecil Gant ("Private Cecil Gant, the GI Sing-Sation", proclaimed the record labels); Ivory Joe Hunter, whose affection for country music was as abiding as Ray's,

Charles Brown, whose influence on Charles has already been mentioned.

Lowell Fulson's trio work for Lauderdale is "gentle and mumbling", but with a large group he was more raucous. When Charles recorded for Lauderdale, he mostly recorded his McSon/Maxm Trio. But he also borrowed, for a few tracks, some players from Fulson's band, with very different results.

These early Lauderdale tracks have been packaged and repackaged, so many times that they're impossible to follow. But there is an easily available and representative selection, *See See Rider* (Premier CBR 1018) which not only sells at a budget price but also has the benefit of a reasonably informative sleeve note which doesn't try to disguise the music's provenance. We hear the trio at its mellowest ("I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now") and in slightly bluesier mood ("Going Down Slow"). But best of all, we get two tracks, "Hey Now" and "Kiss Me Baby", recorded with Fulson's band. "Kiss Me Baby" (a Top Ten r&b hit in 1952) is solid small band r&b, with ensemble vocals and Ray in happy shouting mood; while "Hey Now" is as boisterous as his best Atlantic tracks from several years later.

Another track, "Baby Let Me Hold Your Hand", was Ray's first chart success, reaching seven on the Billboard r&b chart in 1951. The track is generally typical of the mellow trio, except that Ray indulged his penchant for the unusual by playing celeste instead of piano.

The LP has the added bonus of one track, "Walkin' and Talkin'" from among four recorded, apparently by accident, in a friend's room in Tampa in 1947. The music here is harder, and Ray's voice even manages the coarse gospel scream which became his trademark in years to come.

In 1952, Ray's contract with Lauderdale was bought by Ahmet and Nesuhi Ertegun, whose Atlantic Records was just beginning to carve its way through jazz and r&b history. By this time, Ray had disbanded the trio, and had among other working engagements spent some time on the road with Fulson's band

THE

(although he never recorded as a Fulson sideman). The experience was formative. His first Atlantic session was with the sort of jumping little band that Fulson had: piano, trumpet, saxes, drums. None of the four tracks recorded in September 1952 will go down as Ray's most momentous recordings, and it was eight months before he recorded again, in New York as for the first session. This time, the band included some of New York's most accomplished session musicians: Sam "The Man" Taylor on tenor, Mickey Baker on guitar, Connie Kay (later of the Modern Jazz Quartet) on drums. The six tracks recorded spanned a range of currently popular r&b styles. "Funny But I Still Love You" could have been by the McSon Trio. "Sinner's Prayer" (a cover of Lowell Fulson's hit) and "Losing Hand" were ponderous, moving blues with splendid interplay between guitar and Ray's piano. "It Should Have Been Me" was a streetcorner lament, humorously self-pitying as Ray complained that he wasn't getting a far crack of the whip when it came to women.

But the crucial track was "Mess Around", composed by Ahmet Ertegun; the notorious piano introduction sounds remarkably like Professor Longhair, one of the finest New Orleans r&b pianists; and the exuberant band sounds altogether New Orleans-bound as it romps behind Ray's infectiously libidinous voice. "Mess Around" is full-grown rock'n'roll, but this is still 1953, so it was called r&b.

Ray was back recording in New Orleans in December 1953 – and this time under the billing of "Ray Charles and His Orchestra". Having had chart success with "It Should Have Been Me", Ray was now in a position to form his own band. In *Brother Ray* he remembers: "My first band was a bitch, one of the tightest little bands around." Be that as it may, between his first session with the band, in New Orleans at the end of 1953, and his second, in Atlanta nearly a year later, he made several changes to the line-up, the most crucial of which was to introduce David "Fathead" Newman on sax. Newman was part and parcel of the Ray Charles band for many years.

The Atlanta session took place during the middle of a tour; "I Got a Woman" was one of the results. Renald Richard, one of a host of talented songwriters who worked for Ray and/or Atlantic, came up with the lyric, which Ray proceeded to deck out in the gospel chords of an old religious hit, "Jesus Is All The World To Me". The fusion caused consternation among those black customers (church-going or not) who thought that gospel and blues should not be joined together. The record also led into different (but perhaps not unconnected) problems in Houston, where it was banned for being "objectionable" on sexual grounds.

This is where the accepted Ray Charles story runs conclusively into fact: "I Got a Woman" truly did set the seal on Ray's career, making it clear that his carnal version of gospel's spiritual message was here to stay. But, although the search for primary causes in popular music can lead up a dead end street, the seminal secularisation occurred back in New Orleans the previous year, when Ray had helped arrange a session for the Specialty Label's top bluesman, Guitar Slim (Eddie

Jones). The session's highlight was the thunderously successful blues "The Things I Used to Do", built around Jones' hoarse, near-gospel shouting and ringing guitar, while Ray's piano underlined the link with gospel. The record's effect on black singing styles over the next decade was incalculable; the guitar phrases have been adapted ad nauseam by subsequent generations of blues guitarists; and the song is one of the most recorded blues songs of all time. It also provided the first signs of the gospelisation of the Ray Charles sound.

Ray's next session after "I Got a Woman" continued the trend; here, "This Little Light of Mine" became "This Little Girl of Mine". The style was set – because it was proving immensely popular. Both "I Got a Woman" and "This Little Girl of Mine" reached number two on the Billboard r&b chart, and Ray Charles was a star. By encompassing the screaming gospel vocals of Archie Brownlee and Clarence Fountain (both blind, like Ray), Ray Charles' eclecticism was paying off.

But Ray was always looking for ways to change his music, new settings that would extend his range as well as his bank balance. The most enduringly successful extension he found was the Raellets, whose female harmonies and occasional solo vocals eventually became such an integral part of the Ray Charles sound.

The women performed with Ray, not only as a trio but occasionally as soloists. At the first session in which they were credited as the Raellets, Mary Ann Fisher sang on "What Kind of Man are You?". Their function was to draw out the churchy sound of Ray's music – but also, as on "What Kind of Man...", to play the part of the eternally nagging woman, trying to make Ray walk the line. They added enormously to the worldly humour of some of Ray's best work.

Over the next few years, Atlantic tried many different ways of presenting Ray Charles as the fountainhead of black music: "The Genius" tag was simply the most obvious. They also recorded him with Milt Jackson from the MJQ (and with Connie Kay on drums, just as he had been before Ray was a star). By today's standards, the resulting LP sounds like a prolonged doodle, but it gave artistic credibility to Ray's career: this was jazz, not rock'n'roll.

Ray was also recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival, setting the seal on his authenticity – and indeed, the music was very powerful, particularly on a version of Nappy Brown's "The Right Time" on which Marge Hendricks almost sang Ray off the stage. Other sessions included woodwind and strings and a big-band session under the direction of Quincy Jones, another old friend from Seattle.

Far and away the most successful Atlantic session took place in February, 1959, when Ray, playing the electric piano, as shocking in its way as the celeste had been earlier in his career, led the band through a contrived slice of pseudo-gospel that was to earn Ray his first gold disc. "What'd I Say" is generally thought of as the creative high-point of the Atlantic years, but it led him almost ludicrously in its attempts to show what a good time is being had.

Still, Ray wasn't complaining; who would,

when the record topped the r&b charts, and even spent three months on the pop charts? Shortly after this success, ABC Records approached Ray, offered him more money than Atlantic could manage, and Ray duly moved on to the next stage of his career.

Charles' eclecticism had shown itself at Atlantic when he recorded tracks like "Alexander's Ragtime Band", or Hank Snow's "I'm Moving On". ABC saw no reason to curb Charles' enthusiasms. Early hits with the company ranged from a rocking blues version of Tina Turner's "Stocks and Stones" to a sensitive (or cloyingly sentimental) version of Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia on My Mind". This last gave Ray his second gold disc.

Briefly, Ray's records were released on Impulse, ABC's new jazz-orientated label. "One Mint Julep" was an instrumental version of the Clowns' hit; the track came from a big band LP produced by Quincy Jones, and Ray played Hammond organ. Back on ABC, Ray released "Hit the Road, Jack", a song written by Percy Mayfield, a West Coast blues/r&b singer whom Ray had met when he was on the road with Fulson in the early '50s. Once again, the Raellets took the lead in making it quite clear what a louse Ray Charles was.

Ray's career was in top gear now; every record was a hit, either on the pop or r&b charts, or both. He was developing a musical persona of affable fecklessness, perpetually at the mercy of women. Tracks like "Hide nor Hair", "But on the Other Hand Baby" and "Them That Got" were witty and sophisticated blues. Then, in 1962, Ray made the decision which was to boost him into the superstar bracket.

We've already seen that Ray had long held an affection for country music – he was by no means the only Southern black who had heard the Grand Ole Opry. Now, in 1962, he decided to pay tribute (or exploit) that affection with a whole LP of country songs. One track, "I Can't Stop Loving You", became a worldwide success as a single, selling several million copies. The LP itself also became a million-seller. Things carried on in the same vein in 1963: two more country songs, "You Don't Know Me" and "Busted" (originally recorded by Johnny Cash) became Gold Discs. But where "Take These Chains" stuck closely to a country arrangement, "Busted" became a gloriously self-parodying blues in the style of "Hit the Road Jack".

Five gold discs in two years: Ray was far and away the most successful black singer of the day, and among the most popular of all singers in the world. But "Busted" was his last million-seller – by 1964, a different black sound was in the ascendant. Just as Ray was making the most of country music, another set of Southern black singers, like James Brown and Otis Redding, were putting soul music on the map.

This isn't to say that Charles was left behind. If anything, his best country records were still to come. A pair of songs written by Buck Owens, "Crying Time" and "Together Again", made an affecting portrait of love thwarted and then renewed. Whereas white singers tended to maudlinise such songs, the Ray Charles versions are austere, marred only by vocal backings that lack the heart of what the Raellets could do.

But Ray had by no means left black music behind. In 1966, he recorded "Let's Go Get Stoned", r&b with as much gospel as any of his Atlantic hits. The record was even turned into a gospel hit, "Let's Praise the Lord", by Inez Andrews. A year later, Ray recorded a film soundtrack – and made a fine job of it. "In The Heat of the Night" is as claustrophobically steamy as the film it accompanies.

Ray's contract with ABC was by now a leasing deal, whereby material recorded by him under the auspices of his own Tangerine Records was handled by ABC, the rights eventually reverting to Tangerine. The prodigious success of his own records allowed him the change in 1963 to use Tangerine to further the careers of two singers who had had an early influence on him: Percy Mayfield and Louis Jordan. Mayfield recorded two LPs of relaxed blues – a modernised version of the '40s sound of cocktail blues – while Jordan recorded just one LP.

In 1967, Ray began an association with Jimmy Lewis, a young singer and songwriter who had previously sung with the Drifters, and had a small hit in 1965 with "Girls From Texas". Besides recording for Tangerine under his own name, Lewis also wrote one of Ray's best records of the '60s, "Somebody Ought to Write a Book About It" was performed as something very like a waltz, as the Raelets led Ray through this ironic account of the hard times he'd had – particularly in affairs of the heart. Reggae fans might like to compare the original version, with its humorous self-pity, with a version by the Uniques, where Slim Smith's falsetto transforms the irony into genuine self-pity. In 1969, Ray recorded a whole LP, *Doing His Thing*, of songs written or co-written by Lewis. One track, "If it Wasn't For Bad Luck", was a duet between the two, and became a r&b hit.

Even an optimist like me has to concede that Ray's course through the '70s and '80s has been a mixed blessing in terms of music. In 1973 he left ABC, although he still owns the rights to all the records he made with the company. At present, none is available, although many turn up in secondhand shops. For a few years, Ray had his own company, Crossover; but only one record, "Living for the City", merits attention. In 1977, Ray returned to Atlantic, but by then it was a very different company to the one he'd left nearly twenty years before. One track with the company, "Game Number Nine", is as salty as anything he'd ever recorded, and proved that all the charm and talent survived.

In 1983, Ray joined CBS, who decided to make him a country star again. *Friendship*, his latest LP, was wholly made up of duets with country superstars like Merle Haggard and George Jones. In the tradition of such duets, there's more self-congratulation than musical endeavour, but there are moments, particularly with George Jones, when something worthwhile is achieved.

Ray is due to appear in this country this month. He clearly still has the voice, the charm and the charisma to put on a good show, one that will reflect the enormous range of his talent as displayed through thirty-five years of recording. Even at his most dinner-jacketed, that voice and that piano are uniquely moving instruments.



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avez-vous LE JAZZ HOT?


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Oui, mon ami!
JASON WEISS
steps out in the
boulevards
of Paris to
bring you this
guide to the
jazz venues
in the city
where berets
are always
welcome.

SOMETIMES JAZZ actually seems to be flourishing in Paris, though of course it's never enough. The clubs come and go as in any tenuous business, but until recently most have been taxed like full-fledged cabarets having live music. That they survive at all is the real wonder.

Curiously, one of the clubs that has been around the longest is also the most adventurous. The Dunois is a small, relaxed loft-like spot that presents a wide range of music on Fridays through Mondays. In over five years they have become a real home for the avant-garde, while also presenting everything from classical to ethnic to computer music, as well as musical theatre and their ongoing weekly contests between new groups. They even manage to fit in afternoon theatre shows for children.

It is at the Dunois, for instance, that Werner X. Uehlinger of Hot Hut and Hat Art Records chose to present the new albums of the Mike Westbrook Orchestra, in March, and of the Rova Saxophone Quartet, in May. The club also likes to feature a particular musician in different settings for a few nights, such as they've done with British clarinetist Alan Hacker, with French bassist Joëlle Leandre, with Steve Lacy and others. One night you might find Ramadolf's African Roots band, the next night you can hear Elton Dean.

The Dunois is situated in one of Paris' outer arrondissements, near the Chinese district. It seats only 150 people, and usually has a good regular crowd — also being one of the cheapest clubs. For additional diversion they even have several video monitors perched

high up, with videos of concerts and occasional old films filling in the spaces during intermissions. Though funded in part by the city of Paris, "it is the curiosity of the public that is our real support," as Sylvain Tonkian, who manages the Dunois, puts it.

The other most interesting jazz club in Paris is the New Morning. While it features the bigger name acts, from Dollar Brand to Art Farmer to Phil Woods (though Steve Lacy is conspicuous by his absence — why hasn't the New Morning hired his group in a long time?), the club is also quite willing to explore other musical terrain. In recent months it has presented evenings with African musicians Lamine Korte and Djiby Soumaré, Brazilian musicians João Bosco and Harmeto Pascual, Turkish percussionist Okay Temiz's group Oriental Wind, and the young Parisian big band leader Luc LeMasne, with his sparkling orchestra, Bekummerris, one of the most exciting new bands around.

Located in the north-central part of Paris, across town from the Dunois, the New Morning was opened four years ago by Daniel and Alain Fahri. It too is loft-like, with a seating capacity of 500, maintaining an intimate atmosphere around its small bistro tables. The cement walls are decorated with posters of African stamps featuring jazz musicians, plus a bi-monthly exhibit of jazz-related paintings and photographs. Probably the biggest musicians' hang-out in Paris, the New Morning is modeled after its Geneva affiliate of the same name, founded in the late 1970s, and the two clubs often manage to share bookings.

Several other clubs are noteworthy for their particular offerings as well. The patio-bar of the Hotel Menden presents for a week or two at a time some of the biggest names in American jazz, from Eddie Vinson to Cab Calloway's orchestra to Joe Newman. While most of the stars there use pick-up bands, it is an opportunity to hear some old favourites; the place can be a bit expensive, but the music can also be heard quite well outside the bar. Completely different is the Peniche

Atmosphere, an old barge reconverted into a small concert hall below deck, which is docked through the year at several different quays in Paris. They feature mostly local jazz and African groups in an atmosphere that's well, fun. Lastly, there are several clubs in central Paris, all open till the wee hours on the rue des Lombards. The Sunset, a reconverted wine-cellar, is the most jazz-oriented, featuring Christian Escoudé and Gordon Beck in recent months. The Baiser Salé is mostly a blues and jazz-rock club, but with a nice ambience one floor up. And while it isn't exactly a jazz spot, somebody or other might like to know that the Trottoirs de Buenos Aires exists. Five nights a week tangos and other Argentine music can be heard in a cafe-concert setting.

For three years now there has also been a fine ongoing series of jazz concerts on Sunday afternoons at the American Center. Situated in the Montparnasse area of Paris, the American Center is a privately-funded cultural institution that promotes exchanges in the performing arts. Since the spring of 1982 its executive director, Henry Pittsberg, has had the good sense of hiring Mike Zwerin to coordinate the series, whose idea it was. Three concerts per season (twelve a year) are presented, and what is particularly encouraging is that it is the centre's own membership - students in the language,

dance or theatre classes there - that make up the majority of listeners at this popular series. Zwerin likes to book American musicians as often as he can but still keeps the palette thoroughly international. Some of the highlights: Barre Phillips/Michel Portal duo, Christian Escoudé/Jimmy Gourley/Hal Singer, Steve Lacy and Oliver Johnson with Bron Gysin, Burton Greene with Zwerin on trombone, Barry Altschul's quartet with Glenn Ferris on trombone, Paul Bley solo, the Quatuor de Saxophones, Alan Silva's new sextet, and most recently, Anthony Braxton in solo end quartet. In late spring, Zwerin also inaugurated the Interplay series, a pair of duo concerts on three successive nights, combining a wide range of jazz voices, such as Benny Water with Alain Jeanmaire or Joachim Kuhn with Francois Jeanneau. The American Center had been very active in jazz, if less organized, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when many of the AACM and other musicians living in Paris then would perform there; Braxton himself notes that "it was important to the very direction of my life" at that period.

And while the Jazz Festival de Paris has now survived five years, there is a newer festival spread much further over time and space and even musical taste. The Banlieues Blues festival, for the second year this past January and February, offered four weeks of concerts in suburbs on all sides of Paris. Supported in part by the individual cities in which the music was presented, as well as by the Ministry of Culture and other organizations, this had to be one of the most exciting festivals anywhere.

Banlieues Blues featured four premieres: "Tableaux Phoniques Pour Erik Satie", in which Tony Coe, Alan Hacker, Steve Beresford, Phil Wachsmann, and others offered

their tributes in the manner of the master, as in the recent album released by Noto Records; Henri Texier's fine quartet featuring saxophonist Louis Scialoja, with special guest Steve Swallow; trombonists George Lewis and Yves Robert's nonet; and the Didier Levalet/Tony Oxley double quartet. Other highlights included an enthusiastically received concert by Lacy's Sextet, Brian Melvin with Jaco Pastorius, Martial Solal in solo and big band, the Gunter Sommer Quartet, the Clark Terry Quintet, the delightful Argentine-inflected trios of Mosalini/Boyetman/Ceretini and Azzola/Carabini/Fosset, and a superb evening of Pierre Dorge's New Jungle Orchestra and Sam Rivers' Rivbea Orchestra. In addition, there was a whole programme of jazz-related films going on all over the place. Strange to think that a festival of this magnitude can't be happening within the city itself. A large measure of congratulations and appreciation is due to the organizers of the Banlieues Blues festival.

Dunois, 28 rue Dunois, 75013 Paris;
New Morning, 7 rue des Petites-Écuries, 75010 Paris;
Meridien, 81 bd Gouvion-St.Cyr, 75017 Paris;
Peniche Atmosphere, Port St.Bernard, by the Jardin des Plantes (tel. 607-62-00, 806-69-94);
Sunset, 60 rue des Lombards, 75001 Paris;
Baiser Salé, 58 rue des Lombards, 75001 Paris;
Trottoirs de Buenos Aires, 37 rue des Lombards, 75001 Paris;
American Center, 261 bd. Raspail, 75014 Paris;
Banlieues Blues, Service Culturel, Parc Louis Armand, 93270 Sevran.

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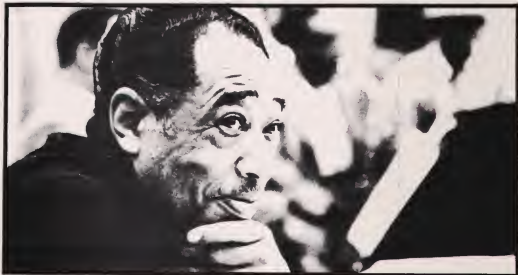
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COOL SPOOLS

GREG MURPHY begins a regular look at jazz on video and risks eyestrain over the Kay Jazz collection.



Duke thinks about a glass of hot water.

IT'S A depressing fact that, as the march of time proves that major jazz musicians are mortal after all, a whole spectrum of jazz becomes archival rather than spontaneous. Records are now the only way to appreciate Art Pepper or Zoot Sims, let alone Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington or Coleman Hawkins. Yet technology is helping once again, this time in the shape of the video tape.

For some years it's been possible to obtain private copies of films and concerts by major jazz musicians, but they had the same problem as private audio tapes – poor quality, incomplete music and bad editing. Happily this is now changing, with the Rochester-based company Kay Jazz Productions putting out video tapes mainly taken from the catalogue of TCB Films – with quality colour or black and white and sound depending upon the age of the source material, although even material taken from 'soundies' (three-minute film clips made for juke boxes in the 'Forties) has good sound quality.

There's a wealth of material now available, but KJ002 is very appropriate – two sessions, one led by drummer Shelly Manne, the other by Zoot Sims. As both have died in recent months, the videos take on a new significance. The Manne set dates from 1970 and was taped at the drummer's own club, Shelly's Manne-Hole in Los Angeles. With Manne is the delightfully succinct tenor saxophonist Bob Cooper, bassist Ray Brown and pianist Hampton Hawes. Around this time, Hawes was falling victim to the record company illusion that they know best how to present an artist, hence all manner of uncharacteristic recordings were issuing forth.

But here Hawes is truly himself, playing his unique mix of straight Charlie Parker with a heavy flavour of the blues. In all, twenty-eight minutes of music with Hawes stealing the honours.

The Zoot Sims session is also from Los Angeles in 1970, at Donte's Club with Roger Kellaway on piano, Chuck Berghofer on bass and drummer Larry Bunker in support – not that Zoot needs any on this evidence. As usual he is the very epitome of poise, his sense of time unerring. True, he seems uncomfortable in places, with shades of uncertainty on "Zoot's Piece", but one only notices this by using Zoot's usual high standards. Another twenty-eight minutes' worth, it's a worthy remembrance.

It's now eleven years since the death of Duke Ellington, and he remains as enigmatic in death as he was in life. Despite the rash of books about him that have appeared in the last decade, bordering on the revealing (Derek Jewell) to the frankly unbelievable (Don Black), Ellington succeeded in keeping most of his private life to himself. The exception is an excellent documentary originally produced for the Bell Telephone Company as part of the Bell Telephone Hour TV series, and this happily appears on KJ017, "On The Road with Duke Ellington". It's a revealing portrait of Ellington, with some straightforward recollections by Duke of his youth – "I used to be an athlete... then one day out in front of my house were two of the prettiest little girls you ever did see... and I ain't been no athlete since!" He reveals his preference for composing "alone, early in the morning, when the cleaners are around... nobody bothers you then..." and the film

concentrates on another "salute" composition Duke played when Morgan State College presented him with an honorary degree, a composition that but for the video would probably have disappeared like so many others. There's plenty of music, from concerts, rehearsals and recording studios, with the commentator bemoaning the fact that Duke "has to play the old favourites night after night" when he could be presenting new works. Other nice touches are Duke's then-enchanted for drinking hot water, his lady killer instinct – "Duke Ellington – I finally get to meet you!" "Yeah, well, I'm getting lucky..." – and Duke justifying his Sacred Concerts which obviously meant a great deal to him. There's much more in this fifty-eight-minute tape, and it finishes with a superb workout on "Take The A Train" which was added from previously edited material when the programme was reshown after Ellington's death.

Kay Jazz have much more in their catalogue, and we hope to write about new releases from time to time, but worthy of immediate investigation are "The Sound of Jazz" (KJ013), the complete version of the famous Robert Herridge produced TV show from 1957, with Basie, Ben Webster, Monk and that superb Billie Holiday "Fine and Mellow" with a haunting solo by Lester Young, which takes on a whole new significance when seen as well as heard. Plus "The Last of the Blue Devils" (KJ012), a history of Kansas City Jazz with Joe Turner, Count Basie and Jay McShann taking part.

(Kay Jazz Productions can be contacted at 77 Sidney Road, Borstal, Rochester, Kent, ME1 3HG)

THE BOOP

CHARLES GARVIE

looks at the jazz

cartoons made by

the Fleischer

Brothers—starring

the flapper who

made them all

flip, Betty Boop.

IN THE 1930s, when the animation studios were either owned by or affiliated to the major motion picture companies, the copyright to popular music by recording stars under contract was freely available to cartoon producers — and some of America's top composers found themselves composing tunes that ended up as background music for a weird and wonderful assortment of characters.

However, many producers were quick to exploit the possibility of building their cartoons around an existing soundtrack, often featuring an animated caricature of the star who had recorded it — thus in the 1934 short, *Toyland* Broadcast, the great Ella Fitzgerald found herself accompanying the Mills Brothers in the guise of a Big Black Mama Doll with four toy soldiers turned Bell-Hops!

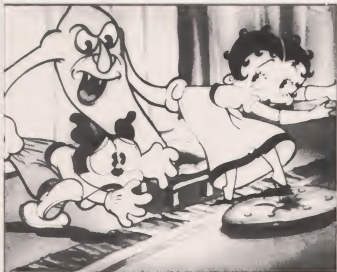
The practice was common enough and various types of music were used for inspiration. However, one studio in particular stands out for jazz fans — The Fleischer Brothers Studio who made cartoons for Paramount and who were Disney's greatest rival. In some ways the rivalry between the studios was a war between East and West. Disney, Kansas reared, was based in California and his cartoons reflected this with their sunny backgrounds, blue skies and white-painted wooden bungalows. The Fleischers, on the other hand, were two

archetypal Jewish immigrants based in New York and their films mirrored their own world of city streets, sky-scrapers, brown-stones and back alleys. They had been reared in Brooklyn and Manhattan and their cartoons were filled with gritty urban images of traffic, noise, speakeasies, alcoholism and drug abuse. It was not surprising that the music they picked to inspire their cartoons was jazz.

The Fleischers made so many jazz cartoons that it is impossible to discuss them all, but possibly the best examples all come from the same series named after its leading character — Betty Boop.

Betty was the original cartoon pin-up and was to the animated film what Marilyn Monroe was to the live action one. She brought sex to the cartoon forty years before *Fritz the Cat* and fell foul of the Censor in 1934 over her flapper's garter! In fact, she was the personification of the entire Jazz Age and a perfect example of the jazz influence in the Fleischers' work. Betty looks every bit the flapper — she has Marcel-waved hair, big eyes, outie-pie lips, deep cleavage, a short black dress, stockings and a garter. She was voiced by Mae Questel (who also lent her vocal talents to Popeye's string bean gal, Olive Oyl) and ranged from warbling innocence to a red hot duet with Cab Calloway in *Old Man of the Mountains*.

From her first appearance in *Dizzy Dishes*



THAT JUST WON'T STOP

(1930), chirruping the Helen Kane "Boop Boop A Doop Song", Betty knocked them dead (even today at 55 she is still influencing our music via Suggs and Carl of Madness—who got together earlier this year as The Fink Brothers to record their single "Mutant in Mega-City One") In her cartoons she starred with various live action co-stars including Rudy Vallee, Fannie Brice and Louis Armstrong, but her favourite cartoon co-stars and protectors were KoKo the Clown and Bimbo the Dog (who looks a bit like the dog on the Adore-A-Kia-Ora advert). Together, this unlikely threesome fought their way through many adventures in unsavoury establishments and nightmarish fantasies.

Take *Bimbo's Initiation* (1931), a sort of surreal nightmare of incessant sound and dark shadowy underground passages, meant to represent the speakeasies where jazz and blues were spawned and the secret societies that grew up with them. The film is also symbolic of (and poking fun at) the rituals and ordeals that were part and parcel of the Ku Klux Klan revival in the Twenties with a few casual images thrown in to suggest the whole thing is perhaps only a "bad trip".

Bimbo is lost in an underground labyrinth and is menaced by sinister hooded figures who hinder his escape with their pulsating chorus of "Wanna Be A Member?" At each



Ms Boop does the watusi



◀ From THE OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS

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BOOP

refusal of membership he is plunged deeper into the labyrinth while the musical score becomes louder and more insistent. However, even in Fleischer cartoons, happy endings are the order of the day—all the hooded figures turn out to be Betty and the over-joyed Bimbo is quite content to be a member after all.

Bimbo's Initiation is often cited by animation historians as the first of what have been termed the Fleischers' "Cartoons Noir" and it is certainly symbolic of a black period in America's history. However, musically it had not yet reached the "sound" that translated the "Aspirin Age", the slimy under-belly of the American Dream, and it was not until a chance pairing of musical director Lou Fleischer and big band leader Cab Calloway in *Minnie The Moocher* (1932) that the Fleischer brothers learned to take the sound of the era and turn it into the surreal visual fantasies that made them famous.

Minnie The Moocher was one of the best things ever to happen to the Fleischer Studio—the cartoon was a hit and Calloway's music seemed to inspire the artists to all-time heights of creativity. It also provided them with licence to expand their scope by utilizing Calloway's lyrics which tended to be written in Harlem Slang. The famous Calloway line "You gotta kick the Gong, to get along with me" would never have made it to the cinemas if it had been translated into its English meaning of "you must take cocaine if you want to be my girl", and likewise surreal and symbolic visuals had to be used as interpretation. A direct shot of drug use was out of the question!

Minnie The Moocher is a masterpiece from start to finish, both musically and visually. It opens with a Calloway trumpet improvisation medley of "Minnie The Moocher" and "St James Infirmary Blues", probably played by Doc Cheatham (the film's credits only give Calloway's name), and then launches into a sleazy parody of the Ruth Etting hit "Mean To Me" before we go into the main number, "Minnie The Moocher". In the film, Betty as Minnie lives a miserable existence with a nagging Jewish father. A spate of brutality from him prompts her plaintive rendering of the "Mean To Me" parody in which she declares "I'll go eat worms and then I'll die" but instead she rings Smokey Joe (played by Bimbo) and the two of them decide to elope. As the terrified pair make their escape they suddenly find themselves in an unreal world which has all the trappings of a cocaine trip. Calloway appears to take up the vocal lead of the song in the form of a disembodied walrus, and everything starts to go wrong for the fugitives. Ghosts and goblins flit through the air and inanimate objects come aggressively to life.

This was the first time that a cartoon had ever involved a subject like cocaine addiction and the only reason it ever saw release was because it camouflaged its meanings under its blanket of Harlem slang (in later years Calloway actually published his *Hipsters Dictionary*, a tongue-in-cheek guide to his lyrics intended for white fans!) However, more importantly, it forged a firm link between Calloway and the Fleischers and it wasn't long before he soft-shoe-shuffled his way back to their studio to record the sound-track for what has become one of the classic cartoon shorts of all time, *Betty Boop's Snow White* (1933), made four years before Disney made animation history with the feature length *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (an interesting snippet—Grim Natwick, the animator who

created Betty Boop for the Fleischers was the same man who animated *Snow White* in Disney's feature!)

Disney's *Snow White* is a version of the Grimms' fairy tale, the Fleischers' *Snow White* is about cocaine! In fact, the very name *Snow White* is a pun on the Harlem word "snow" meaning cocaine powder. The main number of the film, Calloway's "St James Infirmary Blues", is about a boy going down to the morgue at St James' Infirmary to see his girl's body after she has taken an overdose. There's no plot or story as such, just a half hearted attempt at retelling some of the Grimm story by way of an introduction to the long fantasy scene in the "Haunted Cave" where the dwarfs take *Snow White*'s body.

The film opens with a jazz improvisation of Sammy Lerner's *Betty Boop Theme* (Sammy also wrote the now legendary "Popeye" theme) which incorporates strains of "Minnie the Moocher" and then goes into a witty parody of "I Sent A Letter To My Love" as Betty (as *Snow White*) arrives at her step-mama's palace to challenge her Magic Mirror warbling "I've heard about your looking glass, looking glass, looking glass". The mirror, a cheeky looking item with face and hands and a tendency to steal kisses, of course declares Betty "fairest in the place" and the queen decides to get rid of the competition there and then—Betty is taken to be beheaded by two palace guards (Bimbo and KoKo). However, Betty launches into a schmaltzy version of Ralph Rainger's "Here Lies Love" (from Peramont's *The Big Broadcast*) and melts the hearts of her would-be executioners. There follows a very fast resume of the rest of the story in dumb-show while the soundtrack treats us to an instrumental of the Crosby hit "Please" (also from *The Big Broadcast*) during which time Betty gets caught up in a giant snowball, falls in a frozen lake and comes out in a block of ice which just so happens to be shaped like a glass coffin and just so happens to slide into a cottage belonging to seven rather bemused looking dwarfs (there is a sign outside just in case we miss the point).

The dwarfs obligingly take the coffin to the Mystery Cave and KoKo, Bimbo and the queen (now a witch) follow as the soundtrack starts on the introduction of "St James Infirmary Blues". The queen turns KoKo into a ghost-like creature who immediately starts to pace in Calloway's famous strut as he takes up the vocal lead (this effect was created by a technique known as Rotoscoping—invented by Max Fleischer in 1915—whereby live-action footage of Cab was traced by the animators to give a perfect imitation of him in the finished cartoon.)

The fantasy scene that follows has to be seen to be believed. As the creature sings his song an eerie tapestry of ghostly tableaux appear in the gloom of the cave behind him. Each tableau represents a line of lyric and they run in sync with the song. (On closer examination the ghostly figures and skeletons turn out to be caricatures of Calloway and his band.) All ends happily as normal: KoKo is restored to his own shape at the end of the song. Betty is freed from her coffin and Bimbo puts a fitting end to the queen.

The link with Calloway was now firmly established but the Fleischers continued to experiment with soundtracks from other performers. In 1932 another jazz giant had been over to their studios to make *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You*—Louis

Armstrong. Like *Snow White*, *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead* has very little story-line but is unusual in that its sound-track is not a collection of tunes with one main number at the end, but an extended version of the title song, rather like a twelve-inch single. It is a real jazz-lover's delight with live action footage of a young Satchmo and Band, as well as some cheeky caricatures of them in the animated scenes. Basically the plot consists of Betty, Bimbo and KoKo on safari, Betty is kidnapped by cannibals and KoKo and Bimbo have to rescue her. The music has a semi-improvised flavour, a sort of hot and heavy drumbeat with a vocal refrain by Armstrong, his face appearing disembodied in the sky to menace a fleeing Bimbo and KoKo.

Calloway returned to the studio once again in 1933 to record *The Old Man of the Mountains*, which was to be his last cartoon for the Fleischers although his music for "Scat Song" was used for the sound-track of *Betty Boop's Trial* in 1934.

Old Man of the Mountains is a disappointing cartoon in many ways, the highlight being Mae Questel's duet with Calloway in the title number. What is really wrong with this film is that it is too "trad" cartoon (ie Disneyesque) and not the normal Fleischer quasi-abstract visual accompaniment to music. However, it was still considered strong stuff in some quarters and, in 1937, when Betty Boop and Popeye cartoons were licensed for home movie release, the only heavy jazz title to slip through the net in Britain was *Old Man of the Mountains*, although as late as 1957 the Pathéscope company still had it listed in their catalogue as "not suitable for exhibition to children". I think this was due to the *Old Man of the Mountains*' lecherous behaviour towards Betty (again a Rotoscoped Calloway) during their famous duet than from any knowledge of Harlem slang or gong-kicking at Pathéscope!

Today the jazz cartoon is virtually forgotten and there might be scores of them lying mouldering in the film archives of Hollywood. They are ignored by jazz historians, unheard of by most enthusiasts and to all intents and purposes lost for ever.

Perhaps the peak of them as something for children and nothing else. But in the early days of cinema there was no such thing as cartoons for children—they were made for the adult general audience as an important part of the programme just as comic strips such as *Blondie* or *Andy Capp* fill an important role in our newspapers today. However, by the mid-thirties such institutions as the National League of Decency started interfering in Hollywood. Cartoons, they decided, were far too popular with children and should be made "suitable" for them. That was the end of Betty Boop's garter.

Discography

BETTY BOOP Original Motion Picture Soundtracks

BETTY BOOP Scandals of 1974.

Both the above from George Garabedian, California. Both deleted.

CAB CALLOWAY *Kicking the Gong Around* (Living Era AUA 5013).

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SOUND CHECK

ABDULLAH IBRAHIM Live at Sweet Basil (Vol. 1) (EKAPA - 004)

Recorded: New York, 3 October 1983.
Abdullah Ibrahim (p); Carlos Ward (as).

THE GREAT popularity of Abdullah Ibrahim rests on formulae which have remained largely unchanged for over a decade: elegiac playing in slow tempo and loose rhythmic feel alternate with rousing anthems over simple ostinato patterns, characteristically introduced by massive tremolos. There is nothing like a hymn to stir an audience. Then there are plaintive melodies, such as "And Find Me A Shelter in the Storm", worldly-wise in tone, infused with knowing regret. Harmonically orthodox, strongly melodic and insistently rhythmic, the music is instantly accessible. In addition, Ibrahim's identification with the cause of African Nationalism make his a powerful presence.

In concert, these elements can make for an overwhelming experience, but it's not something which is easy to convey on disc. Ibrahim deals with simple means of expression, drawing upon the collective identification of his audience with his performance. The effect is churchlike, even at times religious. *Sweet Basil* serves as a souvenir of such experience, but doesn't engender the same response afresh.

The set is similar to that performed in Britain early in 1984, and much of the material is familiar from previous releases ("For Coltrane", "Soweto", "Anthem for the New Nation"). This performance is relaxed; Carlos Ward plays sparingly, although his solo on "Soweto" is forthright and powerful. Ward is heard to greater effect on *Zimbabwe* (ENJA) and Ibrahim's recent music is more vitally given on a previous EKAPA release, *Ekoyah*. The faithful will find nothing to object to here, but it's not the best album for making new converts.

Jeremy Crump

HARRY BECKETT

Pictures of You
(Paladin Records PAL 2)
Recorded: London - no date
Harry Beckett (tpt); Elton Dean (as, saxello); Pete Sabberton (p); Mick Hutton (b); Tony Marsh (d); Tim Whitehead (ts); Leroy Osborne (voc).

HARRY BECKETT hasn't issued an album as

leader since 1978 - the more surprising as this is his eighth. He's hardly gone to ground during that time, as attested by credits with Elton Dean, Stan Tracey, Dudu Pukwana, Barry Guy and Chris McGregor. Let's hope that more recent collaboration with Working Week will ensure this album the wide hearing it deserves. There's an immediacy about the recorded sound which brings out the best in a lively but rarely too busy rhythm section.

There's not much left unsaid about Harry Beckett's versatility, ranging from a warm, full tone to comprehensive use of glissandi and half-valve effects. The revelation of the album is quite how effectively Elton Dean handles material which is much more conventional than that he's usually associated with. This is as true of some exquisite rhapsodic playing on "The Chosen One" as it is of a fast duet with Tony Marsh near the beginning of "In Case You Haven't Heard Mrs Smith is Here". The British hard bop movement advances - with a couple of surprising standard bearers.

Jeremy Crump



WEATHER REPORT Sportin' Life (Columbia FC 39908)

Recorded: Crystal Recording, Hollywood, with additional recording at the Music Room, Pasadena.
Corner Pocket; Indiscretions; Hot Cargo; Confians; Pearl on the Half Shell; What's Going On; Face on the Barroom Floor; Ice-Pick Willy. Zawinul (synthesizers); Wayne Shorter (saxophones); Omar Hakim (drums, vocals on "Confians"); Victor Bailey (bass, vocals on "Confians"); Mino Cinelu (percussion, lead vocal,

acoustic guitar and bass on "Confians"); Bobby McFerrin, Carl Anderson, Dee Dee Bellison, Alfie Silas (v).

SCEPTICS - PERHAPS hypnotized by the rapid turnover in personnel - are still apt to write off Weather Report as no more than a stylistic chameleon, conservative to the point of cliché in essentials, innovative only episodically and in strict step with market forces. Given that premise, it's understandably hard to distinguish bandwagon from the artistic van.

Few groups have touched on more jazz styles but, more certainly, few of the groups that work under a collective rubric - rather than a leader's name - have so insistently and fruitfully reworked the same musical ideas. It is probably significant that the permanent 'core' of the band, Zawinul and Wayne Shorter, should be the writing and production team, players of the obvious 'solo' instruments and, at the same time, two of the most musically reticent individuals in jazz.

Weather Report has long been a careful balancing act, with the normal ratio and relationship of 'solo' and 'rhythm' neatly reversed. Irrespective of how the credits fell, what one first hears on a Weather Report album is the bass line and then the drumming. As Zawinul said in the early 1970s, "everybody solos", not in turn but "all the time".

Zawinul, who has dropped the forename along with the acoustic keyboards, is one of the best jazz writers and arrangers around. At the same time, he is emphatically not one of the great players, in the bravura sense (it would be less than far-fetched to point at the parallel with Count Basie). In the eyes of his peers, he is a 'complete' composer, not just an inventor of themes or 'heads'. Shorter, more obviously jazz-grounded, has much of the same facility for structure.

Given that, the obsession with personnel, the Pastorius-better-than-Vitus, Hakim vs Mouzon vs Gravat debates are irrelevances. The heart of the band has always been the ability to cut the cloth of the writing to the shape of the players to hand, not the other way round. It is that that has kept up the unity in diversity.

Sportin' Life has a curiously synoptic feel, almost as if Zawinul and Shorter were re-contextualising some of the ideas current as far back as *I Sing the Body Electric*, *Sweetnighter* or *Mysterious Traveller*. The overall feel, determined by Bailey's intense bass work and Hakim's open drumming, is still urban, black and rhythmic, all very far from the conservatoire postures occasionally struck in the Vitous days; yet, even so, there is the



STILL MILES, TIME AFTER TIME

RICHARD COOK takes two Davis records, a quarter-century apart, into custody.

MILES DAVIS

You're Under Arrest
(CBS 26447)

Recorded: New York, 1984/85.

One Phone Call/Street Scenes;

Human Nature; MD 1/

Something's On Your Mind/MD 2;

Ms Morrisine; Katia Prelude;

Katia; Time After Time; You're

Under Arrest; Jean Pierre/You're

Under Arrest/And Then There

Were None.

Miles Davis (t, synth, v); Bob Berg

(ss, ts); John Scofield, John

McLaughlin (g); Robert Irving III

(kybds); Darryl Jones (b); Al

Foster (d); Steve Thornton (perc,

v); Vince Wilburn (d); Sting, Masek

Oiko (v).

MILES DAVIS AND JOHN

COLTRANE

Live In Stockholm 1960

(Dragon DRLP 90/91)

Recorded: Stockholm, 22 March

1960.

So What; On Green Dolphin

Street, All Blues/Theme;

Coltrane Interview; So What;

Fran-Dance; Walkin'.

Miles Davis (t); John Coltrane

(ts); Wynton Kelly (p); Paul

Chambers (b); Jimmy Cobb (d).

SO MUCH separates these two sets – one an exhausting, devastated set of acoustic music, the other a brittle, glittering tableau of electric figures – that one's staggered, again, by Miles Davis' powers of assimilation. There might not be much depth or newness or jazz in *You're Under Arrest*, but as a flash of taut instrumental funk it's a virtuoso show. If the sounds seem spindly beside the improvisations recorded twenty-five years ago in Stockholm, this intransigent set of grooves has its own organised punch.

There's an initial disappointment on two counts. First, given the fascinating, interactive touring group that Davis is currently fronting, the material provides no lift-off points for the kind of cut-and-thrust heard in Europe last year. This "Time After Time" is as pretty as his

stage rendition but it's meagre measure after the fabulous version we heard in London. Throughout a carefully honed programme, the players are tied to their own space: only Davis shifts. The rest vamp or scribble in their particular spot. And alongside this pristine immobility there's a distinct softening of the sometimes venomous attack of the Decoy set. Nothing here has the sheer meanness of "What It Is", never mind the sonorous creativity of "That's Right", a classic Davis performance.

But that's the price on a record that Columbia clearly see as Miles' big shot at the radio. Michael Jackson's "Human Nature" and D Train's moody "Something's On Your Mind" are crossover filets which sweeten the bill without souping it in mere commerce. The arrangements by Davis and Irving are exacting and shrewd: this would filter comfortably from anybody's car stereo. A staccato brightness is the new mark of Miles' music: the fluid Berg is scarcely used at all, and all the sounds are silver and neon.



trumpet, guitar and synths, and drum tracks that snap like camera shutters. The record closes on a musicbox trill for a world winding down ("Ron, I meant for you to push the other button" croaks the leader).

This discounts, nevertheless, the contained but genuine turbulence of "Katia" and the title track, where Scofield twists crazily through the chart. Davis still means the music to sting. While such higher denizens of fusion as Weather Report aim for an ever more florid and shallow impressionism, Miles' similar interest in detail comes in a diamond-hard crust. And he is playing with a finesse that suggests he's entirely at ease. The laconic and touching solos in "Time After Time" and "Human Nature" finger the same eggshells that he once constructed from standards.

The trumpeter who played in Stockholm was the same man, but he had a frightening force by his side. It's fitting that Coltrane and Davis receive equal billing here, for the music is all bound up in their long improvisations. It was Trane's last tour with Miles – as the otherwise unrevealing interview track makes clear, his mind was already on his own group – and the jazz played is a bitter conflict of different temperaments.

Davis opens conventionally enough with an engagingly modest spiral through "So What". Then Coltrane dumps all over symmetry – his solo stunts in everything. "On Green Dolphin Street" starts with dancing muted trumpet, but the saxophonist salutes the form with sour, lingering doodles before scorching off into the ether of the sheets of sound. By the time of "All Blues" and the second "So What" Davis himself is abandoning his restraints. Where Coltrane plunges into the thorniest of brambles, Miles stays tentatively aloof. His open solo on "All Blues" is a design of long, anguished notes: he suddenly sounds desolate. Impervious, Coltrane ripostes with brutal triplets and split tones. The fingersnapping "Walkin'" starts jauntily before both horn players again look into their dark sides. This is a disturbing alliance. Comparison with how Davis played this material a year later at San Francisco's Blackhawk – where he's sharp and prolific with well-turned phrases – shows the demands Trane was pushing on to him.

Amid this fractional intensity, Kelly's frolicsome solos seem banal, Cobb's beautifully swinging beat a little too straightforward. For Davis and Coltrane, though, the set is indispensable and absorbing. Perhaps what the music best tells us about Miles is how closely he guards his heart – and there is the real link between *Live In Stockholm* and *You're Under Arrest*.

same concern for texture and space and with rhythmic structure rather than head-plus-solo improvisation.

Shorter, with writing credits for three of the titles, is less obviously dependent than on the recent *Domino Theory* on the Lyndon programmer. His solos on "Face On The Barroom Floor" and Zawinul's "Indiscretions" are convincingly direct, less staccato and more open-shouldered than he once might have permitted himself to be. Elsewhere on the album, though, he is more characteristically reserved, never an obsessive expressionist.

Weather Report's use of voices goes back to *Body Electric* and *Traveller*. There, notably on the doomy "Unknown Soldier" end, contrastingly, the anthem "Nubien Sundance", they were used for choral effect, additional instrumental and emotional colouration. Sportin' Life deals the voice a more functional role, strongly rhythmic. McFerrin, Anderson, Bellson and Silas, individually and collectively agile, are used in synoposed and stop-time passages to great effect.

The only disappointments are a misconceived cover of "What's Going On" and the percussion work of Mino Cinelu, whose folk "Confessions" nonetheless provides an interesting individual showcase and a typical gesture toward stylistic variety.

For long enough now, Zawinul and Shorter have not only predicted and chronicled but created their own atmospheric conditions. Sportin' Life finds them again at the leading edge of a warm front, hints of thunder just on the horizon; no revolutionary poses, but no bankable retrenchments; no nostalgia but no contempt for past achievements; above all, no obscurantism, but a perfect blend of intelligence and accessibility.

Brian Morton

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Jumpin' the Blues Vol 2
(Ace CH 135)

No session details.

THE GRIFFIN BROTHERS' ORCHESTRA

Riffin' With The Griffin Brothers Orchestra
(Ace CHD 136)

No session details.

WYNONA CARR

Hit That Jive, Jack!
(Ace CH 130)

No session details.

AS THE echoes of the post-war boom died away at the end of the Forties, economic necessity forced many r&b big bands to slim down, in the process adding extra emphasis to the rhythm, extra volume to the solos.

Jumpin' The Blues shows how exciting the results could be. Drawn from the US Decca catalogue, recorded from 1949-54, the music forgoes subtlety in favour of energy. Titles include "Black Buster Boogie" and "My Kind of Rockin'" - you get the picture? Loudmouthed vocalists dominate, like Stomp Gordon, with a voice as wholehearted as his name. Several tracks are black cover versions of white country hits: Joey Thomas on Moon Mullican's "Cherokee Boogie" swings like billy-o. Two women, Mergie Day and Little

Esther, are equally spirited, but the star here is Cecil Gant. He was quite capable of subdued emotion, but here is electrifyingly energetic; listen to the piano on "Rock Little Baby". This is where Jerry Lee Lewis took lessons.

The Griffin Brothers bridge the gap between Lucky Millinder and Little Richard. They're fondly remembered in Jamaica, where Jimmy Griffin's rasping trombone had a lasting impact on musicians like Don Drummond, and reemerged at the turn of the decade as ska. Listen to "The Teaser", shift the rhythm and you almost hear the Skatalites. But the band's most successful records featured their vocalists, Mergie Day (as featured on *Jumpin' The Blues*) or Tommy Day, on the evidence here a major shout. His "Weepin' and Cryin'", the band's biggest hit in 1951, is an emotionally saturated performance, Tommy's lugubrious singing supported by sobs from one of the band members: terrific!

Sister Wynona Carr, accompanying herself on guitar, recorded gospel for Specialty in the early Fifties. In 1955, Bumps Blackwell, the label's leading arranger, took her on as vocalist in his band. She cheerfully dropped the Sister, her long white robe and her guitar, and started making non-religious records. Blackwell, seeing her as a passport to pop success, tried her in many styles: the Latinista "I'm Mad At You" contrasts with the noisish blues of "Please Mr Jailer" and the cabaret pop of "Someday, Somewhere", all strings and breathy echo. She could also whoop like Little Richard, as "Act Right" shows. She never achieved pop success; shortly after, Blackwell tried a similar secularisation on Sam Cooke, with spectacular results. Wynona was no mere guinea pig, though; at her lightest, she was charming. Given room to move, she was exciting.

Neither the Griffin Brothers nor Wynona Carr has had an LP before. It's wonderful that at this late date, Ace can rediscover such thrilling performers.

Nick Kimberley

LEE KONITZ

Dedicated to Lee
(Dragon DRLP 66)

Recorded: 8-9 November 1983.
Lee Konitz (alto sax); Lars Sjosten (piano); Gustavo Bergagli (trumpet and flugelhorn); Torgny Nilsson (trombone); Hector Bingert (tenor sax); Gunnar Lundstrom (baritone sax); Lars Lundstrom (bass); Egil Johansen (drums).

DEDICATED TO LEE features Lee Konitz with a Swedish pick-up group organised by pianist Lars Sjosten. Perhaps "Dedicated to Lars Gullin" would have been more appropriate as the compositions and arrangements are by the late Swedish baritone saxophonist. They are a perfect example of the process of international dissemination that attends each development in jazz. In this instance it is the West Coast school that has come under scrutiny; neatly crafted ensembles which suit Konitz's style to a tee. Nobody puts a foot wrong during this non-alcoholic celebration of Gullin's writing skills. It is an unabashed exercise in plagiarism, but it is done well; the arrangements and compositions date from the mid-fifties, and viewed in this context it is remarkable how thoroughly the essence of the Miles Davis nonet-West Coast sound was

absorbed. It is a record that will be of more interest in Sweden because of Gullin's status as an almost international musician although Konitz' involvement is clearly intended to lend broader appeal.

Stuart Nicholson

DEWEY REDMAN/ED BLACKWELL

In Willisau

(Black Saint BSR 0093)

Recorded: Willisau Jazz Festival, 31 August 1980.

Dewey Redman (ts); Ed Blackwell (d).

TWO MEN who remain among the most quirky and fascinating of post-bop improvisers, both of them intimately familiar with the syntax established in the early bends of Ornette Coleman, and in fiery and adventurous collaboration at the Willisau Jazz Festival five years ago. Both artists have shared the experience of the Old And New Dreams band, performing Ornette's early remoulding of bop. The original Coleman legacy of open, thematic horn improvisation not founded on orthodox harmony, coupled with a clean, unhesitant percussion style rich in tonal variety is superbly embraced here by Redman and Blackwell.



Horn/drum duos are difficult projects to sustain. Redman, a brusque, cantankerous player with immense stamina and foresight is ideally suited to it. The opener - "Willsee" - superficially resembles both a Coleman tune and glimpses of the willful irony of Sonny Rollins. Blackwell, as in many places on the session, follows the theme unerringly, his tom tom accents an object lesson in protecting the melodic qualities of the drums. Redman plays a long, colourful solo on the opener, beginning with fleet, tumbling, bopish lines, passing through more slythly, abstract sounds, running through moods alternately frantic and squeezy, then wide, rolling and expansive.

He plays the mallets on the same side in a theme that begins plaintively and accelerates into a bagpipe-like wail over Blackwell's insistent soliloquy of rnmshots and reverberating rolls. Redman's bluesiness is strong in the record's side's up tempo "Communication", taken at such a beat that his pop phrasing blurs into a lava-like fluidity interspersed with guttural, whooping, half-sung passages. A glibly exposition of two highly sophisticated improvisers working at the limit - and without a slack moment, despite the limited palette.

John Fordham

C H E C K

MIKE WESTBROOK ORCHESTRA

On Duke's Birthday

(hat Art 2012 - 2 LPs)

Recorded: Maison de la Culture,

Amiens, 12 May 1984.

Mike Westbrook (p); Tony Marsh

(d); Steve Cook (b); Brian Godding

(g); Dominique Pifarely (vln);

Georgie Born (cello); Chris



Biscoe (as, ss, bs, ctn); Danilo Terenzi (tbn); Kate Westbrook (voc, flt, th); Phil Minton (tpt, voc); Stuart Brooks (tpt, flg).

MIKE WESTBROOK's career has been a remarkably varied contribution to orchestral jazz in Britain - an area of music that on Westbrook's arrival in the late '60s was dominated by more or less dispensable derivations of American big band styles. Westbrook's early groups were a bold and unapologetic development of traditional devices mixed with the extroversion of the free-jazz of the period. Since that time, in a variety of guises - some closely associated with the theatre, with street-music and cabaret - Westbrook has maintained his enthusiasm for keeping jazz a popular and eclectic language, and his indebtedness to Duke Ellington.

On *Duke's Birthday* is probably Westbrook's most sophisticated recording, and represents exactly that contribution that he was cheered onstage for in his first arrival on the scene: the ability to mould an inheritance to a style distinctly his own. Westbrook often conceives of music as Ellington did - on a large scale, composing passages specifically for the idiosyncrasies of particular individuals, varied intelligently in mood, capable of subtle atmospherics and bold, uncluttered swing. Though his melodic imagination rarely produces the truly memorable themes that his mentor did - Westbrook has rarely promised to enter Mike Gibbs' territory in producing songs that other performers clamour to borrow - his strength is in the unity of his bands and the immense suppleness with which he develops skeletal and fragmentary tunes into rich and resonating textures that could only be derived from the jazz orchestra.

On *Duke's Birthday* opens simply with the gentle rhapsodising of Westbrook's piano. Brian Godding's raw, metallic guitar then sets up a riff against which the members of the band enter one by one. The performers hover, eventually settling into a pumping, insistent horn theme which repeatedly scatters into warbling sounds like fireworks arching up and

bursting. The piece develops through mixes of powerful, driving orchestral passages and rippling, shimmering interludes for the violin and cello. Dominique Pifarely in particular proving capable of both aching delicacy and an attractively jaunty, straight-ahead jazz swing. Westbrook's punchy "East Stratford Too-Doo", which sounds like a supercharged version of a West Side Story theme, features brash and vigorous horn lines over a compulsive piano/guitar riff, though slightly disappointingly drifts in a rather colourless exchange of solos. But the second part of the title track is pure Westbrook - a lazy, sumptuous melody of deceptive simplicity that reminds you occasionally of mid-60s Gil Evans but is fundamentally Westbrook's own. At the close, the piano returns, doodling softly into silence. A memorable tribute to a twentieth century genius.

John Fordham

ALAN HACKER

Hacker ilk

(Nato 214)

Recorded at La Butte aux Oies,

16, 17, 18 July 1984.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Six

Studies in English Folk Song",

John Cage, "Sonata for Clarinet",

Harrison Birtwistle, "Verses",

Karlheinz Stockhausen, "Un Petit

Oiseau Chante à la Fenêtre";

Alban Berg "Four Pieces for

Clarinet and Piano", Peter

Maxwell Davies, "The Seven

Brightnesses", Corey Field,

"Music for Clarinet and Piano",

Luang Pradit Phirée, "A Quick

Variation of Seang Kum Neung

Thao".

Alan Hacker (clarinet); Karen

Evans (piano).

PEOPLE ARE going to be attracted first of all to the sleeve of Hacker ilk which, in a thin genre these days, is beautiful. It's to be hoped that they will be caught up in the music as well.

The range is extraordinary, from Alban Berg's difficult Opus 5 of 1913 and Vaughan Williams' 1927 folk song studies to Corey Field's long 1983 piece, to Cage, Birtwistle's "Verses" which Hacker premiered in the 1960s, and as far afield as Luang Pradit Phirée, who brings the album full circle with a foxy feel which, duly transformed, recalls Vaughan Williams.

The Nato label clearly has a thing for clarinets (and for cats, which feature on the disc label and all over Tony Coe's excellent *Tournée du Chat*). ilk is an extraordinary album by a phenomenally gifted musician who seems at home in almost every register and style. Berg and Birtwistle have been known to reduce even seasoned instrumentalists to tears. Here they sound effortless. The Cage Sonata can sound banal. Here it is completely convincing, surely played as its composer intended. Not just recommended, very strongly recommended. If it doesn't 'outsell' *Acker Bilk's Greatest Hits* I'll... probably shuck, spit and mutter "Typical" (steady on, Brian - Ed.)

Brian Morton

DAVID LIEBMAN QUARTET

Sweet Fury

(From Bebop to Now Recordings

BBN 1002)

Recorded: Puget Sound, Toronto,

23, 24 March 1984.

Full Nelson; A Distant Song;

Nadir; Spring 82; Missing Person;

Tender Mercies; Feu Vert; A

Picture of Dorian Gray.

David Liebman (soprano and

flute); Don Thompson (bass,

piano and vibes); Steve La Spina

(bass); Claude Ranger (drums).

DAVID LIEBMAN cuts a lonely, steady furrow. Understatement and resilience have always been his most obvious characteristics, qualities communicated most recently to his pupil on sax, Bill Evans. "Sweet Fury" was a friend's attempt to capture Liebman's mixture of intensity and downright niceness. Both qualities are on show in an album that strings eight tracks into a suite that may be Liebman's most impressive and personal work since the duos with Richard Berach.

Don Thompson, a generously gifted Canadian, supplies piano and vibes (the latter on "Nadir"), doubling on bass with Steve La Spina for "Missing Person". Liebman's love affair with drummers has always been one of his greatest motive forces and on *Sweet Fury* Claude Ranger adds to the carefully textured percussive effect of the Quartet some of the most inventive and 'tuneful' cymbal work this side of Paul Motian.

The final track, borrowing its title from Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*, offers a clue to Liebman's musical personality. Wilde's aestheticism is well known but Dorian Gray, whose portrait aged in an atab while its subject remained young, is a fascinating choice of subject for a piano solo by Thompson. Liebman may have been thinking of Dorian modes but throughout *Sweet Fury* there is a hint of that combination of beauty and fatality and destruction. This is Liebman at his most adventurous, sweet on the turntable but intellectually furious.

Brian Morton

MIKE ZWERIN JAZZ TRIO

Too Much Noise

(Spotlite SPJLP19)

Recorded: Gafinel Studios, Paris,

31 October, 1 November 1978.

Laker to London; Sunshine;

Rebere; Meeting Point; Peace;

Tickle Toe; Django.

Mike Zwernin (bass trumpet A1,

A3, B2, B3, trombone A2, A4, B1);

Christian Escoude (acoustic

guitar A2, A3, B1, B2, amplified

guitar, A1, A4, B3); Gus Nemeth

(bass).

LIKE KEITH Jarrett, Mike Zwernin believes that too much modern music has been soured by technology. Jarrett claims that amplification is actually harmful; Zwernin, that it just doesn't sound as good.

For the Trio, "less is more. The stress is on a collective sound, three voices intermingled." Wire columnist Zwernin doubles on his old favourite bass trumpet and trombone and produces a rich, fat sound on both. He and sidemen Escoude and Nemeth contribute a title each to the first side before ending with a Karlheinz Stockhausen tune, given a straightforward and respectful reading. As is

Ornette Coleman's "Peace" at the beginning of side two, though this lingers a bit, given the instrumentation.

Zwern is unpredictable but by no means pointlessly so. His roots are in jazz and in many respects he's a traditionalist. The album is rounded off with two more or less standards, Prez's "Tinkle Toe" and John Lewis's tribute to Django Reinhardt, an obvious vehicle for Escudé, who shares Django's gypsy blood, or (gently) amplified guitar.

Not Much Noise is a reworking of a 1978 recording. The quality of reproduction amply fulfils Zwern's first aim, the easy chair accessibility of what Erik Satie called Furniture Music. The choice of titles alone, leaving aside the verve of the playing, will be enough to keep anyone awake.

Brian Morton

PETER CUSACK & CLIVE BELL

Bird Jumps Into Wood (Bead 22)

Recorded: London Musicians' Collective 1983-84.

Gust; Fishing For A Thousand Monsters; Spray Paint In The Wind; Red Ochre; Bird Jumps Into Wood; Paradise Style; Searching For The Blue Hare; Slate; One Tongue Speaks As Two; To Them The Cicadas Speak From The Ground; Dontology.

Peter Cusack (g, bouzouki, environmental tapes); Clive Bell (fl, shakuhachi; khene; crumhorn).

THERE WAS once a predilection among the Western rock avant-garde for incorporating the folk musics of the East. So often, the results were coarse juxtapositions of texture and form; at worst, they stank of a white-man-bringing-home-the-bacon-style smugness.

Bell and Cusack's largely improvised set avoids these pitfalls – quite simply because the music aims for a one-ness with its taped and 'original' contributions. And it lacks easy companions. A variety of influences are apparent – Thai, Japanese and Eastern Mediterranean voices dominate – yet the greatest contrast is not so much within tracks as between them: the crude blues phrasing of the opening "Gust"; the orthodox pairing of flute and guitar on the jazzy "Dontology"; the pastoral beauty of Bell's Chinese flute solo "Red Ochre"; and the magnificent "To Them The Cicadas Speak From The Ground", with its interwoven taped sounds of chirping cicadas, shipyard thrash, and primitive polyphony courtesy of Bell's wooden mouth organ.

David Illic

PINSKI ZOO

Speak

(Dug Out Records PINS 005)

Recorded: Sin City Studios,

Nottingham, Feb-Mar 1984.

Blue Jam In Paris; Awkward

Companions; Jump Out Of The

Water; Speak (If You Can);

Snakes Like Frogs; Beach Burns;

Don't Dig The Grave; Frogs Like

Files.

Jan Kopinski (ss, as, ts); Stovel

Illiffe (p); Nick Doyné-Ditmas (b);

Tim Bullock (d).

A FEW years ago, Pinks Zoo might have crawled up there with Rip Rig & Panic as the great white wonders of youthful British jazz. Instead, they've been set upon by hordes of an older generation who shout "rip-off" whenever mention of a new record is made. Not that Speak is exactly going to silence those who level accusations of plagiarism – the familiar traits of Ornette Coleman's harmolodic method are still very much in evidence. Yet here, the renewed forces of Kopinski and Co compress and compact the energy and dissonant collective interplay into twisted epithets which involve and discriminate. Lop-sided structures are coloured and stretched with a common fervour: ill-fate rings angular statements from the keys; bass and drums curl around the framework like electric eels, while drums lend a spacious-but-steady propulsion. It might have taken the pairing down of the group to achieve it (they once functioned as a six-piece) but the growth and direction so apparent on these two sides is enough even to see off Coleman's "Of Human Feelings" as comparatively staid and unadventurous (Whaaat? – Ed). And that's saying something!

David Illic

AKI TAKASE

ABC

(Eastwind EWIND 703)

Recorded: New York – 20, 21 and 24 May 1982.

I Hear Your Music; Dohkei; Down Dance; Arishiki No Evans; ABC; Subconscious-Lee; Silent Night; Jan. 19th.

Aki Takase (p); Cecil McBee (b);

Bob Moses (d); Sheila Jordan

(vcl).

MY ACQUAINTANCE with the work of Takase dates from the Berlin Jazz Festival of 1981, which is very likely where she first met up with Moses and Jordan. The vocalist, however, plays a minimal part in the proceedings, appearing briefly on only three tracks, and the album is to all intents and purposes a trio set.

Stylistically, it covers the ground from conventional changes (as on the presumed tribute to Bill Evans) to technically free improvisation. The latter is usually fairly restrained, though, and often opens and closes with some thematic material – which is true of "Down Dance" where the composer credit goes to Ichiko Hashimoto. The other similar routine is the title track, its 'theme' based strangely enough on the notes D – B – G, in which Aki, B (ob) and C (coll) make separate statements but build up an impressive momentum between them.

It has to be said that, at times, Takase seems to pick on the less than the admittedly very strong 'rhythm' players. Perhaps it could be unfair to prick on "Subconscious-Lee" (the complex Konitz line on the changes of "What Is This Thing Called Love") but the pianist's phrasing is rather stiff, tending if anything to rush despite the very fast tempo. If this is merely one aspect of an album that is overall rather unsatisfying, Takase is nevertheless very promising and has a lot of time ahead of her.

Brian Priestley

PHIL UPCHURCH

Companions

(Paladin PAL 4)

Recorded: Hollywood – August and September 1984.

Companions; Song for Lenny; Mr. T. (B.A.'s Song); Show Your Love; Tell Me I'm Not Dreamin'; Blues in the Middle; Rosanna; See See Rider.

(Collective personnel) Phil Upchurch, Lenny Breau (g), Gerald Albright (saxes), Rodney Franklin, Russ Ferrante, Will Boulware (keyb), Kevin Brandon, Nate East (b), Land Richards (d), Mike Fischer, Steve Forman, Phil Upchurch (perc), Mike Baker, Jimmy Witherspoon (vcl).

UPCHURCH IS a name to conjure with, both in the r & b field (remember "You Can't Sit Down") and in the session world (albums for Stan Getz among others). This album hews much closer to the former type of work, aiming at danceable grooves with, on "Rosanna", a guitar and sax combination which recalls Morrissey-Mullen. And, for the sake of moving a few units, the leader/producer is not above including two wimpy vocals by one Mike Baker, who sounds like Stevie Wonder without the balls.

Despite the all-star(?) instrumental personnel, nothing striking happens in terms of improvisation although, for the record, what must be one of the last appearances of the legendary Lenny Breau should be noted on two of the enclosed tracks. But no sparks fly between the guitarists, and even the closing guest vocal by Witherspoon which first caught my eye (how's that for a giveaway?) seems rather bred. Probably because the whole album was recorded in a 57-track studio, and took a couple of months to mix down.

Brian Priestley

GEORGE RUSSELL

**ELECTRONIC SONATA
FOR SOULS
LOVED BY NATURE - 1968**



GEORGE RUSSELL

Electronic Sonata for Souls

Loved by Nature – 1968

(Soul Note SN 1034)

Recorded: live 28 April 1969 at

Sonja Henie/Neils Onstad Centre

for the Arts, Høvikodden, Oslo.

Events I – XIV.

Manfred Schoof (trumpet); Jan

Garbarek (tenor sax); Terje

Rypdal (guitar); George Russell

(piano); Red Mitchell (bass); John

Christensen (drums).

C H E C K

IF THE BBC are serious about the precedent set by Ellington, then it oughtn't be too long (that is, not too many years at BBC pace) before George Russell makes "This Week's Composer". One of the most profound and speculative of all jazz writers, he is still an absurdly undervalued figure. Max Harrison's *Reliance Anthems* (Wires 3, 4 & 5) refocused some much-needed attention; the release of a 1969 recording of the "Electronic Sonata" should help convert some new listeners.

The piece – hardly a sonata in the conventional sense – consists of fourteen events which are less themes or solos than episodes in an unfolding musical idea. A taped backing, featuring the voices of an African man and his sons, provides a context for group statements of a pan-stylistic nature... meant to convey the cultural implosion occurring among the earth's population, their coming together. The sources of Russell's eclecticism are alarmingly venous: avant-garde jazz, reggae, blues, rock, serial music. On the other hand, and in contrast to recent work by the likes of Jah Wobble, styles are not simply trotted out, aired and dispensed with. Russell manages to suggest that each mode is being adapted and transformed.

In this small band version of the "Sonata", Russell has chosen his players well. Schoof is a greatly underrated horn player, the Steve Lacy of his instrument. Garbarek shows off the pugnacity that in the 1970s tended to get cloyed in prettiness. Terje Rypdøl, as he showed in *Morning Glory*, is a much subtler group player than front man. Mitchell provides a thoroughback and Christensen is unshowy.

Russell developed "Electronic Sonata" under the aegis of Ny Musik, the Norwegian section of the International Society for Contemporary Music. Scandinavia afforded a special awareness of musical experimentation and offered a romantic mysticism much tougher than American or "southern" varieties, certainly more disciplined. The "Sonata" was inspired by a statement by Russell's friend Tund Aastad: "Nature likes those who give in to her but she loves those who do not". That stress on resistance and self-reliance is what makes a composer like Sibelius or Nielsen so distinctive and which links them to the Americans like Ives or Copland.

Russell is first and foremost a composer, one who pushes the bounds of jazz out towards the realm of "serious" music. "Electronic Sonata", deriving on the Lydian Chromatic concept of tonal organization which Russell developed, is inseparable from the philosophy that inspired it, one which combines the improvisatory romanticism of American art with an older, more rooted cultural ethos: "nature is perhaps only testing the truth of a soul's belief in itself, its belief in its essence".

Brian Morton

URS BLOCHLINGER TRIO
Aesthetick als Widerstand – Urs Blochlinger Trio Live
(Planisphere PL-1267 3/4)
Recorded: Der Alten Muhle Merenschwand, Oct 1982.
An Other Thing And Other Things; Baghwan Business; Baghwan In America; Ancestral Meditations; Fifi & The Heartbreaker; Mani; Altes Kungisches Volkslied; Die Stimme Des Volkes; Ballade

Ordinaire.
Urs Blochlinger (ss, as, bs, flt, ch-phn, anklung); **Thomas Durst** (b); **Thomas Heistand** (perc).

URS BLOCHLINGER TETTET Neurotica
(hat Art 2008)
Recorded: Studio Sonographic, Schlieren, Switzerland, 4-6 June 1984.

King Arthur Meets Hanns Eisler In Hollywood; Peggy's Blue Skylight; Quick Motion Picture With A Brake Shoe; Oh, Soviet Vieh, Sophie; Where Is My Funny Ballantine's; Combinations; Kungisches Arbeitslied; Niemand Weiss Hinten, Wie Er Vorn Dran Ist; The Psychology Of Steeplechase; Neurotica; Adrenalini; Baghwan Business.
Urs Blochlinger (ss, as, bs, flt, ch-phn, Anklung, little instruments); **Ruedi Hausermann** (flt, alt-flt, as, bs, little instruments); **Hans Koch** (ts, bsc); **Glen Ferris** (tbn); **Jurg Ammann** (p, melodic); **Thomas Durst** (b); **Dieter Ulrich** (d, bugle).

"THE ONLY reasonable way to treat the past respectfully seems to be to treat it without any respect at all, to abuse it affectionately." Christian Rentsch in his sleeve note to *Neurotica* highlights a manner of creative friction particular among contemporary European jazz composers. Mathias Ruegg is one – a fastidious and consistent force in modern music who only recently has made public his various small-group projects, preferring the fixed instrumental resources of the magnificent Vienna Art Orchestra as a vehicle for extreme re-writes of Scott Joplin, Mingus, Braxton and Roswell Rudd, among others.

Blochlinger, a saxophonist/composer from Switzerland, as yet only espies to such heights. To be fair, he has never been afforded a run of recording with the same line-up, yet his love of Afro-American avantists of the fifties and sixties – Braxton, Coltrane and Mingus in particular – has struggled through the undergrowth of two quite diverse albums. But that apart, the recorded results are like chink and cheese – *Neurotica* drawing up to seven musicians over its 12 studio cuts is as quirky and captivating as *Aesthetick*, with its three sides of sprawling live work (a fourth takes in various solo indulgences), is careless and frustrating.

Aesthetick's opening out bodes deceptively well, with bold tonal statements and near-telepathy together as the trio effortlessly steams through the metrical chopping and changing. By side two, that same tightness has almost strangled the spirit – what started as agile and free-flowing has now merely settled into programmed eventuality. The nadir is reached with an appalling cover of the Art Ensemble's "Ancestral Meditations" – generally bloated and academic in feel, and complete with Heistand's strangely sluggish, heavy-handed brushwork.

Blochlinger's orchestral approach is far better served by *Neurotica*'s seven-piece – where the solo breaks (excepting the

spectacular free flights of the seemingly repressible flautist Hausermann and pianist Ammann) are like delicate freys in a highly decorated fabric. The spirit of Mingus is at work here, although Blochlinger riffs even deeper – into the jazz mainstream – scoring the parts with near-mathematical precision. It's a lively set nonetheless – the fleshed-out, strolling blues theme of "Where Is My Funny Ballantine's" is a definite winner – densely packed with detail which manifests different colours and shades on each airing.

David Iltis

ANTHONY BRAXTON
Seven Standards 1985, Vol 1
(Magenta MA 0203)
Recorded: NYC – 30, 31 January, 1985.
Anthony Braxton (as); **Hank Jones** (p); **Rufus Reid** (b); **Victor Lewis** (d).

IT WAS Herman Melville who, in *Moby Dick*, exclaimed "Oh time, strength, cash and patience!" but that quotation would be an apt heading to the catalogue of Anthony Braxton's extraordinary adventures in sound. Never mind his plans for 100 orchestras or his unplayed works for string quartet (see Wire 16), even Braxton's attempts to blow a little bebop have been subject to alarming vicissitudes.

Eleven years ago he recorded a set of standards that were released on the Steeplechase label as *In The Tradition* (volumes one and two). At the time, his intention was to release a set of tunes from "the post Parker continuum" every seven years, but time, cash and other circumstances being what they are, *Seven Standards* has appeared four years behind schedule. When *In The Tradition* first came out, Braxton was criticised by fellow avant-gardists for playing bebop, and by bebop purists for his highly individual approach, which included such outrages as playing "Ornithology" on contrabass clarinet! Recalling these events in his sleeve notes, Braxton points out with justifiable asperity that nowadays bebop is almost compulsory and that punts need not worry as his contrabass clarinet is broken and he has no money to fix it – "poverty somewhat narrows one's option possibilities, if you know what I mean," he remarks with bleak wit.

Though he has rarely played as "straight" as he does here, *Seven Standards* bows to no orthodoxy, past or present. In particular, it is well distanced from the rather formulaic hard bop currently in vogue: the great man's playing is as fresh as it has ever been. Just a few months ago, Max Roach was saying that, for him, Braxton exemplified the creative spirit of Charlie Parker for more than any bebop copyist because Braxton, like Bird, went his own way – and it would be hard to imagine a more original, delightful yet respectful version of the post-Parker continuum than the one Braxton gives us.

His fleet, airy alto spins gold through classics like "Joy Spring", "Spring Is Here", Clifford Jordan's "Toy" and "You Go To My Head", an old Braxton favourite, previously explored with Dave Holland on the *Trio And Duo LP* and with a quartet on *Donne Lee*. These new Braxton performances exude the same captivating charm as his "Maple Leaf Rag" with Muhl Abrams, dancing with a lightness of touch that disguises virtuoso

technique. He blows high, fast and with incredible clarity on, say, "Joy Spring", then shows a similar deftness with the tender emotions of "Old Folks". His fusion of grace and fire is breathtaking. He's abetted, of course, by a resourceful rhythm duo and the redoubtable Hank Jones on piano, all of whom hold firm through Braxton's more extravagant flights and prove very capable of ingenious touches themselves.

At the moment *Seven Standards* is only available as an expensive import, but Magenta are an offshoot of Windham Hill, some of whose records are distributed in Britain by A&M. Whether they'll have the vision to release the LP here remains to be seen; let's hope so because it's a celebration and a masterpiece, one of the year's essential recordings.

Graham Lock

EMILY REMLER

Catwalk

(Concord Jazz CJ 265)

Recorded: San Francisco –

August 1984.

Emily Remler (g); John D'Earth (tp); Eddie Gomez (b); Bob Moses (d).

EMILY REMLER's fourth LP for Concord shows her developing into an authoritative player and a composer of strong, attractive tunes. Though her music is rooted in post-bop mainstream and inspired particularly by a love of Wes Montgomery, Catwalk admits Latin and African influences as well as a touch of funk on "Antonio". If the recording careers of Montgomery and George Benson have made jazz guitar fans wary of any step towards populism, Catwalk reassures with its fundamental emphasis on jazz values: group rapport, collective sensibility, and democratic allocation of solo space.

Remler's own playing is fluid, unfussy; her strongest suit aptly categorised in Nat Hentoff's sleeve notes as "siney" lyricism. Gomez and Moses offer stalwart support, muscular when necessary but also capable of delicate colourings, while John D'Earth adds a dash of urgency and swing. "Pedals" and "Five Years" are the meditative tracks, perhaps a touch too meandering, but "Catwalk", "Antonio" and "Mozambique" go sassily uptempo. Latin/African rhythms are adroitly handled – the music bright, busy yet intriguingly spacious and individual.

"Mocha Spice" is a personal favourite, its lit embroidered by Remler's clipped melodic flurries. If she continues to write songs as good and as catchy as these, she may yet convince jazz guitar fans that commercialism has an acceptable face.

Graham Lock

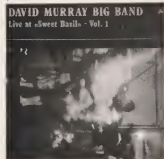
DAVID MURRAY BIG BAND

Live At "Sweet Basil", Volume 1 (Black Saint BSR 0085)

Recorded: NYC – 24–26 August 1984.

David Murray (ts, bs clt); Olu Dara (cnt); Baikada Carroll (tp); Craig Harris (tbn); Bob Stewart (tba); Vincent Chancey (Fr hrn); Steve Coleman (as, ss); John Purcell (as, clt); Rod Williams (p); Fred Hopkins (b); Billy Higgins (perc); Lawrence "Butch" Morris (conductor).

THOUGH I think David Murray's best work is to be found on the more precisely textured music of his octet records, this big band LP features some wild blowing, ingenious arrangements and, above all, a sweaty sense of fun.



"Lovers" opens, a warm ballad on which Murray's tenor, huge and purring, dances the tune in a bear-hug while the band blows stately-sweet choruses. "Bechet's Bounce", first heard on *Love At The Lower Manhattan Ocean Club*, is a carousing delight, more swashbuckling but less cohesive than the octet's brilliant New Orleans salute on "Dewey's Circle" (from Ming). The band really do bounce it from start to finish and the horns tangle funously, with the fiercest bursts from Murray's bass clarinet and Harris' trombone.

On side two, things go farther out. "Silence" is a crazily convoluted post-AACM bebop that belies its name and boasts swinging drums from Billy Higgins. Higgins too is the backbone for the long, turbulent "Duet For Big Band", which begins with a humorous bass/tuba dialogue then cuts up rough, failing solos are spliced between ensemble exchanges that mix traditional dynamics with moments of seeming chaos that miraculously unfold into new order.

The band sound like they're having a while of a time and, though I miss Henry Threadgill's distinctive alto and flute voicings, it's hard to resist joining them. *Live At "Sweet Basil"* is good time music as good as it comes.

Graham Lock

COMPANY

Epiphany

(Incus 46/47)

Recorded: ICA, London, 29 June–

3 July 1982 (Company Week).

Ursula Oppens (p); Fred Frith (elec gtr, live electronics, perc); George Lewis (tbn); Anne Le Baron (harp); Akio Suzuki (glass harmonica, anaplos, spring gong, kikkokikiri); Julie Tippetts (ac gtr, voc, flt); Moto Yoshiwaza (b); Keith Tippett (p); Phil Wachsmann (vln, electronics); Derek Bailey (ac and elec gtr).

... WHEREAS, ANY other wild-card innovator has ended up assimilated into some "tradition" or "history" or other dampener. Well, it's in the nature of the extramusical to colonise and to extinguish music, we shouldn't be bitter. Just careful. And playful.

This is a record of a meeting, of diverse musicians under Bailey's stringently loose

ruled, to improvise (whatever that means) together (whatever that means). It's divided into seven sides, Epiphanies "First" to "Sixth", and "Epiphany" itself. It's devastating.

Without even being perfect. Empathy (or perhaps, to be vicious, experience) is occasionally missing, most notably "First", a duet between Oppens and Moto that doesn't seem to open into anything much. And it would, of course, be nice to see them as they listen and react. I must before I die meet a kikkokikiri in the – what? Flesh? Very likely (reviewer shudders). But from a record that's rich in them, the highlights:

"Second" is a bent flamenco smashed to glass shards by Bailey, Wachsmann and Tippetts, "Third" a gaunt and brooding roar turning ugly, gnashing and grinding and snapping (Frith, Yoshiwaza and Bailey, with Lewis providing his inimitable shrugs and mutters, and Suzuki an astonishing array of brittle noise). "Epiphany" takes up both sides of the first disc, a vast, remarkable, irreducible monster of improvisation, with all players contributing as it creeps and swells and grows through its echoing length: "Uh huh" says Lewis at its close, justified satisfaction, and the applause explodes.

But "Sixth" is the hardest of all to fathom, the furthest from ways we might be used to – even by Company's tough standards it unfolds treacherously, a pontiffist abstract, with no predetermined emotional matrix to help us sweep it into corners we might want or know or understand. What is there to say? "After a brutal crescendo, silence descends like a symphonic petal." For this is music at its synaesthetic limit, able to invent even the holes in sound with colour, texture, fragrance and weight. For a while, anyway.

Mark Sinker

PAUL SHIGIHARA, CHARLIE MARIANO, TIM WELLS, MICHAEL KUTTNER

Tears Of Sound (Nabel)

Recorded: Cologne – 13/15 November 1984.

Shighihara (g, g-synth); Mariano (as, ss, f); Wells (b); Kuttner (d).

Charlie Mariano's a useful musician to have on hand when it's a matter of cross-pollination, east and west, electricity and acoustics. His reeds have a pancaulic timbre that brings a Roman flavour to the coldest studio creation. So it is with much of *Tears Of Sound*. Everybody does a bit of writing and the atmosphere is airy, generously good-humoured. All four are attentive listeners, with Kuttner unafraid to play quietly – or not play at all. Shighihara has several tones, including a resonant classical and an electric throb, and all seven pieces have been organised with some thought. "Tango" is playful, satily and bitter by turns. "Zana" stiffs funk as it turns through the changes, "Hymn" sweetly exotic in its introduction.

The superb sound illuminates Mariano's tones. On alto he strains out of register, and this makes "Randy" – a memorial to Colin Walcott – crabbily moving. On soprano he spins enjoyable complexities against the respectful rhythm section. The only failure here is Shighihara's treatment of Coleman's "Lonely Woman", fuzzed-out violence tearing the melody asunder to no particular purpose.

Richard Cook



FOUR DECADES OF A RED HOT BAND

RICHARD COOK boxes clever as the reissue programmes put up their Dukes.

DUKE ELLINGTON

Duke 56/62 Volume One
(CBS 88653)

Recorded: July 1956–June 1959.
Black And Tan Fantasy; A-Flat Minor; Suburban Beauty; Cafe Au Lait; West Indian Dance; Cop Out; Allah-Bye; Piano Improvisations; Commercial Time; Mood Indigo; Mood Indigo; Willow Weep For Me; Where Or When; All The Things You Are; All The Things You Are; Night And Day; Slamur In D Flat; Track 360; Jones; Lullaby Of Birdland; Feet Bone; Red Carpet; Satin Doll; When I Trilly With My Filly; Anatomy Of A Murder.

Duke 56/62 Volume Two
(CBS 88654)

Recorded: December 1959–June 1962.

Brown Penny; Pie Eyes Blues; Sentimental Lady; Sweet And Pungent; The Swinger's Jump; Lullaby Of Birdland; Lullaby Of Birdland; Dreamy Sort Of Thing; The Wailer; Asphalt Jungle Suite; Lotus Blossom; Matumbe; Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'; Tulip Or Turnip; Jingle Bells; One More Once; Blues In Hoss Flat; Asphalt Jungle Theme Pts 1 & 2; Bon Amour; Paris Blues; Turkish Coffee; Jingle Bells.

Collective personnel: Ray Nance, Willie Cook, Cat Anderson, Clark Terry, Fats Ford, Eddie Mullens, Shorty Baker, Francis Williams, Bill Berry (t); Joan Tizol, Lawrence Brown, Britt Woodman, Booty Wood, Louis Blackburn, Chuck Connors, Quentin Jackson, John Sanders (tbn); Jimmy Hamilton, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Paul Gonsalves, Russell Procope, Rick Henderson (reeds); Duke Ellington (p); Jimmy Woode, Aaron Bell, Arvell Shaw (b); Sam Woodyard, Oliver Jackson, Jimmy Johnson (d).

Featuring Paul Gonsalves
(Fantasy F-9636)

Recorded: New York – 1 May 1962.

C Jam Blues; Take The A Train; Happy-Go-Lucky Local; Jam With

Sam; Caravan; Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'; Paris Blues; Ready, Go.

Roy Burrowes, Cat Anderson, Billy Berry, Ray Nance (t); Lawrence Brown, Leon Cox, Chuck Connors (tbn); Paul Gonsalves (ts); Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope (as); Harry Carney (bar); Duke Ellington (p); Aaron Bell (b); Sam Woodyard (d).

DUKE ELLINGTON

The Essential Duke Ellington
December 1927–October 1928
(VJM VLP 73)

Recorded: New York, 29 December 1927 – 1 October 1928.

Red Hot Band; Doin' The Frog; Sweet Mama; Stack O' Lee Blues; Bugle Call Rag; Take It Easy; Jubilee Stomp; Harlem Twist; Take It Easy; Black Beauty; Black Beauty; Jubilee Stomp; Got Everything But You; Yellow Dog Blues; Tishomingo Blues; Diga Diga Doo; Doin' The New Lowdown; Black Beauty; Swampy River; The Mooche. Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf, Arthur Whetsol (t); Joe Nanton (tbn); Barney Bigard, Rudy Jackson, Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney (reeds); Duke Ellington (p); Lonnie Johnson (g); Fred Guy (b); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d); Irving Mills, Baby Cox (v) (collective personnel).

Hot From The Cotton Club

(World Records EG 26 0567 1)
Recorded: New York, 1927–1930.

The Mooche; East St Louis Toodle-Do; Hot And Bothered; Diga Diga Doo; Black Beauty; Mood Indigo; Ring Dem Bells; Doin' The New Lowdown; Black And Tan Fantasy; Jungle Jamboree; Big House Blues; Old Man Blues; Rockin' In Rhythm; The Blues With a Feeling; Misty Morning; Goin' To Town.
Personnel: basically as for VJM VLP 73.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Cotton Club Legend
(RCA NL 89506)

Recorded: New York, 1929–1941.

Duke Ellington: *A Nite At The Cotton Club; The Missourians; Market Street Stomp; Fess Williams Royal Flush Orchestra: A Few Riffs; Eubie Blake Orchestra: My Blue Days Blew Over; Louis Armstrong: Medley Of Armstrong's Hits; Adelaide Hall & Mills Blue Rhythm Band: Drop Me Off In Harlem; Mills Blue Rhythm Band: Love Is The Thing; Cab Calloway: The Lady With The Fan; Duke Ellington: Daybreak Express; Cab Calloway: Minnie The Moocher; Jimmie Lunceford: Swingin' Uptown; Willie Bryant: 'Long About Midnight; Billy Banks: The Scat Song; Teddy Hill: King Porter Stomp; Ethel Waters: Jeepers Creepers; Duke Ellington: Bojangles; Lena Horne: St Louis Blues.*

ELLINGTON'S LEGACY is so vast, and yet it's still being added to, eleven years after his death. Newcomers to the music frequently ask me where to begin with Duke: I'm increasingly tempted to shrug and say anywhere. Given the vagaries of record availability, Ellington's output has become like some huge, labyrinthine bureaucracy, a mountain of compilations and concerts and airchecks and bona fide studio dates. Only the most diligent Ellingtonist could keep track of it all.

The appearance of *The Cotton Club* has inevitably spawned a small rash of cash-in collections. EMI's set, at least, is fairly exemplary: most of Duke's Okeh sides programmed out of order but in clear mono sound. Like the VJM record, which it overlaps in five tracks, it portrays the Ellington group as a black dance band with airs of sophistication and a useful team of hot soloists. There are maybe three masterpieces ("Black And Tan Fantasy", "East St Louis Toodle-Do" and "Old Man Blues") which show the leader aspiring to something greater, but in tunes like "Doin' The New Lowdown" an energetic routine is transcended only by a moment like Miley's sparkling work.

Ellington was already alert to the possibilities of untied combinations: hear the trumpet and bass sax in "Got Everything But You". But this was still a band without a particular character – Duke's "Yellow Dog Blues" might as well be a Don Redman arrangement for Fletcher Henderson. Both LPs (VJM's is the third volume in their comprehensive ongoing series) sketch the period intelligently, but *The Cotton Club Legend* is a meaningless hotchpotch. Some of these players had only the most tenuous CC

links, and it's peculiar to find the grotesque blurring of Fess Williams on the same record as Teddy Hill's "King Porter Stomp", with the twenty-year-old Dizzy Gillespie getting cautiously out of order.

Neatly enough, the earliest track on Duke 56/62 is the 1956 Newport rendition of "Black And Tan Fantasy". In piece of the gauche melancholy of 1927, this one – including Falstaffian outbursts from Cat Anderson and Quentin Jackson – is okey, even comedic. It starts two sets of purportedly unused or rare tracks from Ellington's fruitful period with Columbia, and the four sides are a fascinating cache of notes and offcuts from an inhumanly prolific workbench.

It's heavily inconsistent. Tracks usually stay unused for a good reason, and there's a fair degree of filler here. Brief episodes like "A-Flat Minor" and "Track 360" are no more than polished fragments; "When I Trilly With My Filly" is about as undistinguished as its title; and the twinnings with Basie's band in "One More Once" and "Hoss Flat" remain a dumb idea. A more important disappointment is "Piano Improvisations", ten minutes of Ellington alone with Jimmy Woode and Sam Woodard which is as idle a conceit of doodlings as one could imagine. This is the great man warming up in his most transparent cocktail manner. Listen instead to the two oblique versions of "All The Things You Are", where the same trio explore a mood of unusual bleakness.

Peddling aside, there are enough marvellous tunes to make both volumes valuable. "Fet Bone" is a dazzling display of what Duke could do with nothing more than a series of riffs: each section takes a turn, and the textures are amazingly eclect. Three different tries at "Lullaby Of Birdland" yield a trio of definitive versions, with Clark Terry – frequently forgotten as an Ellingtonian – in exalted command on the first. The "Asphalt Jungle Suite" is a witty piece of programme music, and the exotic "Matumbe" a useful addendum to "A Drum Is A Woman". And there are stray beauties like "The Wailer", a low-lidded slouch that proves to be a fine vehicle for Paul Gonsalves' hooded ruminations on tenor.

Gonsalves was arguably the most interesting soloist Ellington ever had, in an institution that had to subsist on a familiar repertoire. Gonsalves' tenor is always the fresh lick, the renewing of surprise. He had Webster's wryness but his furry, sweet, singing sound could be Lestonian; his solos are a profusion of fast melodic slides that could sound tentative and insistent, simultaneously. All this makes featuring Paul Gonsalves essential and unique: a 1962 date, apparently impromptu, where Duke decided to feature his tenorman as the only soloist on a programme of trusted Ellingtonia.

Gonsalves rose magnificently to the occasion. "Paris Blues" becomes a rapid, purposeful arrangement of a discursive theme that the soloist twists through famously; "Reedy, Go" has him piling up blues phrases with an apparently reckless abandon that still resolves for the climax; "Take The A Train" comes up miraculously bright, with gorgeous cadences; and "Happy-Go-Lucky Local" is a train picture that affords Gonsalves' most intimate breathings, notes husking down into silence. Here and elsewhere there are unobtrusive bits of Duke's hand: sample the counterpoint on "C Jam Blues".

Twenty-three years on, we're just lucky so-and-so's to hear it at last.

KENNY WHEELER Double, Double You (ECM 1262)

Recorded: New York – May, 1983.

Kenny Wheeler (tpt, flg-hrn); Mike Brecker (ts); John Taylor (p); Dave Holland (b); Jack de Johnette (d).



DAVE HOLLAND QUINTET Jumpin' In (ECM 1269)

Recorded: Ludwigsburg – October, 1983.

Dave Holland (b, cello); Steve Coleman (as, flt); Kenny Wheeler (tpt, pocket tpt, crnt, flg-hrn); Julian Priester (tbn); Steve Ellington (d).

Both Dave Holland and Kenny Wheeler have in the past seemed easier with other people's compositions than with their own. Wheeler in particular was apt to drift into the kind of self-consciousness that made albums like *Deer Wan* so unsatisfactory.

Here, though, both have produced albums as leaders which reflect their full dual potential as performers and writers. In the opening "Foxy Trot" on *Double, Double You*, Wheeler opens his shoulders into one of the most exuberant, least introspective solos we have heard from him so far. Ironically, it is the rest of the band which sounds reserved, notably John Taylor and Jack de Johnette. Mike Brecker has emerged as an able and often surprisingly subtle jazz soloist. The rock/fusion posturing seems to be behind him and the music he now produces has a convinced and convincing edge that was missing from his Brecker Brothers outings.

The meditative "Ma Bel" will perhaps be more immediately recognisable territory to longer-standing Wheelersians, but even there there are gestures and flourishes that bespeak a widening emotional range. The (almost) title track "W.W." opens with a passionate trumpet/sax fanfare and develops into a love song that retains enough ambiguity to keep it at least head and shoulders above schmaltz.

The second side avoids anticlimax by the width of a few well-weighted solos, but it's a less happy performance, rather obviously mediated, without much sense of dramatic development. The playing, from all five, is immaculate. Whatever else, it shows off Wheeler's interest in small group arrangement.

Kenny Wheeler turns up again at the head of Dave Holland's quintet outing, *Jumpin' In*.

As the title suggests, the tempo is up a notch or two and the use of the third horn in piece of piano gives the whole a looser, edgier feel than the Wheeler album. It also puts greater demand on Holland's bass and drummer Steve Ellington to hold things together. The title track uses an urgent, excitable attack that at first hearing disguises the subtlety of the writing. It's perhaps no accident that Holland should have dedicated this album to the memory of his great fellow bassist Charles Mingus.

There was no tougher act to follow. Mingus quotes are kept to a sensible minimum, but the feel, despite the German provenance, but probably because of the stifling of American talent, is blacker and gutsier than Holland has attempted on record before. All the residual conservatory inflections have gone.

It might be asked if the justly famous ECM treatment was right for this set. It works fine on more atmospheric cuts like "Sunrise", with its cello and flute passages, but the reminder call for a rawer, harder take. But why quibble? Two excellent albums by important contemporaries.

Brian Morton

JOE PASS, J.J. JOHNSON We'll Be Together Again (Pablo 2310-911)

Recorded: Hollywood – 26 October, 1983.

J.J. Johnson (tbn); Joe Pass (g).

JOE PASS Live At Long Beach City College (Pablo Live 2308-239)

Recorded: Long Beach – 20 January, 1984.
Joe Pass (solo g).

Versatile though he is in most settings, there is no doubt, in this writer's opinion, that to fully appreciate Pass' artistry you really need to hear him playing solo – preferably in live performance. *Live At Long Beach*, his latest from Pablo, affords the listener ample opportunity to do both.

Playing mostly finger-style – as he does during such unaccompanied ventures – Pass has few rivals these days. He can sustain interest over fairly lengthy solos – like his so-called "Duke Ellington Sophisticated Lady Melange", lasting six and a half minutes – in a genuinely creative way. He also manages to reinvent oldies like "All The Things You Are" and "Blueette" with a freshness and sparkle that does not always seem possible. For a "Honey-suckle Rose" request, he chooses the beboppers' variation on same – "Scapple From The Apple" – producing a superlative series of variations of his own. Monk's "Round Midnight" is treated with particular sensitivity. Using a plectrum, Pass' blues-playing ("Blues Dues", "Blues In G", both JP originals) is not too profound, but is nevertheless convincing.

The LP with Johnson is extraordinary. Perhaps one of the most unusual combinations of jazz instrumentation yet devised, *We'll Be Together* is a real success, primarily because of the sensitivity and musical acumen of the participants. The mere fact that they sustain – beautifully – over two full sides of the album is due as much as anything to a mutually creative spirit, the advanced sense of dynamics shown by both, and an almost telegraphic rapport.

C H E C K

Pess, especially, has rarely, if ever, played as adventurously as here. His own role is akin to that of a tightrope-walker. He plays with time exclusively, often acting both as accompanist to J.J.'s sotto voce trombone declarations, and as a soloist – at one and the same time. "Bud's Blues", "Solar", and "When Lights Are Low" are each perfect illustrations of that facet of the guitarist's comprehensive contributions. His picking in general is well-nigh flawless. Johnson's is a no less demanding part. He is almost literally a "brass bass" behind several Pass solos, and his control, articulation and immaculate taste are beyond reproach.

Perhaps the two finest tracks of all are "Nature Boy" – with Johnson's opening statement combining both poignancy and a sense of eponymy – and "Limehouse Blues" – played at the kind of tempo that is completely unpredictable. But a wholly delicious "How Long Has This Been Going On?" runs 'em both close. **Stan Britt**

FRANK PERRY
New Atlantis
 (Celestial Harmonies CEL 011)
 Recorded: London – September 1983.

Frank Perry (petalumines, Tibetan bells, singing bowls, invocation cymbals, whistling bowl).

GUNTER SOMMER
Hörmusik Zwei
 (Nato 49)
 Recorded: Chantenay.
 Villedieu, France – 17 July 1983.
 Gunter Sommer (drums, percussion, organ pipes etc.).

Neither Frank Perry nor Gunter Sommer, on the evidence of their respective albums, could be termed orthodox drummers, or even percussionists. Both have turned their attention from the traditional time-keeping role of their instruments to explore other areas.

Perry and Sommer have evolved unique and intensely personal vocabularies which enable them to work against the inherent characteristics of percussion. They do this not by changing the nature of their instruments (for instance by modifying them electronically) but by exploiting some of the attributes of members of the percussion family.

New Atlantis and Hörmusik Zwei indicate just how far they have come in this research, and the particular areas in which each is currently working.

In attempting to create music which evokes and illuminates his religious beliefs, Perry has worked towards a sustained percussion sound (where one of the principle qualities of percussion sounds are their sharp attack and short decay times). He allows the sounds to arise and float in the air, slowly unfolding the tiny details which proliferate within superficially simple tones; having suspended them there he allows them to resonate about us. The first side of the album is a piece performed on petalumines, instruments he has made himself, while on the second side the tonal range expands to include Tibetan bells and singing bowls.

Sommer has filled his drumming with melody. Working with more orthodox percussion (adding only tubular bells and organ pipes to the more general fare) he

weaves rhythmic and melodic ideas through each other in a colourful musical tapestry, an articulate and satisfying whole in which the absence of more usual melodic instruments is barely noticed. Careful control of timbre sustains a friendly, chattering music of great warmth and subtlety.

Thus New Atlantis and Hörmusik Zwei present two very different, but original, approaches to percussion. Neither Perry nor Sommer eschew rhythm, although both have superceded the simple role of metronome, Perry working at a measured, meditative pace while rhythms continually bubble through Sommer's work. They handle their tools with confidence and discipline to create music which engages, satisfies and embraces their listeners.

Kenneth Ansell

ANDRE JAUME MUSIQUE POUR 3 & 8
Errance
 (hat Art 2003)
 Recorded: Sides A & B: Paris – 16 April 1983. Sides C & D: Le Mans – 3 December 1983.

Andre Jaume (b clarinet, clarinet, as, ts); Francois Mechali (b); Gerard Siracusa (perc); Blaise Catala (vln); Bruno Girard (vln); Jean-Charles Capon (cello); Norbert Bordet (cello); Bruno Chevillon (b).



ANDRE JAUME
Patiences
 (Grim Musique GRIM 3)
 Recorded: St. Martin de Castillon – 27 February, 20 March 1983; Marseille – 30 November 1980; Paris – 16 March 1983.

Andre Jaume (as, ts, bts, b clarinet); Raymond Boni (elec g); Herve Bourde (fl); Jean-Marc Montera (ac g); Francois Mechali (dbl b); Fred Ramamonjiarisoa (p); Gerard Siracusa (perc).

ANDRE JAUME QUARTET & GROUPE TAVAGNA
incontru
 (Nato 194)

Recorded: Haute-Corse – 13 & 14 April 1984.

Andre Jaume (saxes, clarinet, fl); Bruno Chevillon (b); Jean-Marc Montera (g); Gerard Siracusa (perc); with Jean-Claude

Albertini, Jean-Pierre Lanfranchi, Jean-Etienne Langnani, Charly Levenard, Francis Marcantei and Jose Zuccarelli (all voice).

Three releases from Jaume, spread across three different labels which examine four areas of his work: in duos, a trio, quartet and with a small string ensemble. This breadth offers insights into both his work methods and the roots of his musical vocabulary.

In fact, to take the last first, so to speak, the most recent recording, *incontru*, is, itself, a three-way meeting between Jaume's quartet, the Southern European polyphonic folk music of the Groupe Tavagna and the poetry of Andre Cehavaggio. This album is, of course, Jaume's most rigorous examination of the musical influences at work in his music, and also the least integrated, although it remains a telling musical document.

Cehavaggio's poems are recited against suitably impressionistic musical backdrops, but Groupe Tavagna and Jaume's quartet only intermittently cohere. The folk choir's work is strong and rich – the individual members improvising harmonies and melodic ornamentation in relation to the sound of the whole choir – and Jaume's quartet in time mettle, but interaction is limited, perhaps by deference or the level of mutual regard in which the musicians appear to hold each other. Where it does occur, for instance, most impressively on "Madrigale: Ecco Bella", it suggests that this is a partnership that it would be worth pursuing further.

The legacy of the black jazz tradition – free jazz – in Jaume's work is affirmed on *Patiences* (a series of duos) and on one album of the hat Art double set which is devoted to a trio of reeds, bass and drums. But both sets of recordings also confirm how he has brought his own perspective, incorporating European folk and art music, to bear on the form. From the personal dialogues (ranging in themselves from the squeezed saxophone/guitar evocation of Gershwin's "The Man I Love" to the popping, brittle agitation of "L'Enfant Sauvage") to the muscular coherent trio of "Errance", Jaume's work is confident and engaging. He also reveals a particularly expressive ballad style, at work to particular effect on the aching, almost elegiac duo with flautist Bourde on "Salam III" and the haunting, plaintive trio, "Mangou".

The remaining album of *Errance* features Jaume's writing for a six-strong string ensemble, percussion and his own reeds. It underlines that thread of the Western classical tradition which – not surprisingly – runs through his work, without any attempt to artificially wed the two in a vanguard on the "Third Stream". For instance, "Libecau" recalls the music of Carl Orff (perhaps via Christian Vander's French group Magma) towards its close. The cross-fertilisation of ideas resonates throughout, with Jaume emerging as an impressive composer who has digested the sources which echo through his work, and has created a uniquely personal voice in the process. Listen, for an example, to the beautiful dark string sonnettes of "Sennin Rumore".

Jaume is an important figure within contemporary French – and European – jazz: an importance which encompasses both his playing and writing. These recordings convey an impression of the range and breadth of his work and vision, generously rewarding attentive listening. **Kenneth Ansell**

RECENT RELEASES

• The following have been released, or imported, since the last issue went to press. Except where a date is shown, they are believed to be recent recordings but no liability can be accepted for inaccuracies in information.

Listing here does not preclude a subsequent review.

GEORGE ADAMS/DON PULLEN: Live at the Village Vanguard (Soul Note SN 1094)
CANNONBALL ADDERLEY: 'Somethin' Else' (1956) (Blue Note BST 81595)
CHET BAKER/WARNE MARSH: Blues for a Reason (Cris Cross CRSS 1010)
CHRIS BARBER: Best of (1954-55) (Decca TAB 86)
COUNT BASIE: Afrique (1970) (Doctor Jazz ASLP 009)
GORDON BECK: Celebration (JMS JMS 035)
GEORGE BENSON: The Electrifying (c. 1973) (Affinity AFFD 140)
ART BLAKEY: A Night at Birdland Vol.1 (1954) (Blue Note BST 81521)
—The Big Beat (1959) (Blue Note BST 84026)
PAUL BLEY: Sonor (Soul Note SN 1065)
CLIFFORD BROWN: Alternate Takes (1953) (Blue Note BST 84428)
DOLLAR BRAND: This Is the Dollar Brand (1965) (Black Lion BLP 30139)
KENNY BURRELL/GROVER WASHINGTON: Togethering (Blue Note BT 85106)
DON BYAS: Anthropology (1964) (Black Lion BLP 30126)
DONALD BYRD: A New Perspective (1963) (Blue Note BST 84124)
TOMMY CHASE: Driva (Peladin PAL 5)
BILL COLEMAN/BEN WEBSTER: Swingin' in London (1967) (Black Lion BLP 30127)
JOHN COLTRANE: Blues Train (1957) (Blue Note BST 85177)
CHICK COREA: The Song of Singing (1970) (Blue Note BST 84353)
TONY COLE: Le Chat Se Retourne (Nato NATO 257)
WILLIE COOK: Christ Mood (Phonastic PHONT 7563)
PAT CRUMLEY: Third World Sketches (Spotlite SPJ 531)
MILES DAVIS: Vol.1 (1952-53) (Blue Note BST 81501)
—(w/JOHN COLTRANE): In Stockholm (1960) (Dragon DLP 90/91)
ARNE DOMNERUS: Portrait of Porter (Phonastic PHONT 7561)
JIMMY DORSEY: The Uncollected Vol.5 (1948) (Hindsight HUK 203)
DUKE ELLINGTON: The Essential Vol.3 (1927-28) (VJM VLP 73)
—Not from the Cotton Club (1927-30) (EMI ED 2605671)
RICKY FORD: Shorter Ideas (Muse MR 5314)
GIORGIO GASLINI: Schumann Reflections (Soul Note SN 1120)
BENNY GOLSON/FREDDIE HUBBARD/WOODY SHAW: Time Speaks (Timeless SJP 187)

PAUL GONSALVES/RAY NANCE: Juet A-Sittin' and A-Rockin' (1970) (Black Lion BLP 30138)
DEXTER GORDON: Gol (1962) (Blue Note BST 84112)
JOHNNY GRIFFIN: You Leave Me Breathless (1967) (Black Lion BST 30134)
DAVE GRUSIN: Lost of a Kind (GRP GRP-A 1011)
HERBIE HANCOCK: Maiden Voyage (1965) (Blue Note BST 84195)
MARK HELIAS: Split Image (Enja ENJA 4086)
JOE HENDERSON: Mode for Joe (1965) (Blue Note BST 84227)
FREDDIE HUBBARD: Hub Cap (1961) (Blue Note BST 84073)
—PETER HURT: Lost for Words (Spotlite SPJ 525)
PER HUSBYKARIN KROG/JOHN SURMAN: Dedications (Affinity AFF 136)
CLIFF JACKSON: Carolina Shout (1962) (Black Lion BLP 30136)
LEROY JENKINS: Urban Blues (Black Saint BSR 0083)
CLIFFORD JORDAN/JUNIOR COOK: Two Tenor Winner (Cris Cross CRSS 1011)
STANLEY JORDAN: Magic Touch (Blue Note BST 85101)
BARNEY KESSEL/STEPHANE GRAPPEL: L'Imeshove Blues (1966) (Black Lion BLP 30129)
WILLIE MABON: Willie Mabon (1952-60) (Chess CXMP 2058)
JEAN-PIERRE MAS: Trapeze (JMS JMS 036)
KESHAVAN MASLAK (w/CHARLES MOFFETT): Blaster Master (Black Saint BSR 0079)
M'BOOM: Collage (Soul Note SN 1059)
LARRY McLEAN: Tiffin' the Scales (1962) (Blue Note BST 84427)
HANK MOBLEY: Far Away Lands (1967) (Blue Note BST 84425)
THELONIOUS MONK: Vol.1 (1947-48) (Blue Note BST 85110)
—The Man I Love (1971) (Black Lion BLP 30141)
LEE MORGAN: Delightfulee (1966) (Blue Note BST 84243)
—The Rajah (1966) (Blue Note BST 84425)
MORRISSEY/MULLEN: This Must Be The Place (Coda CODA 15)
MUDDY WATERS: Rare and Unissued (1947-60) (Chess CXMP 2057)
MARK MURPHY: Nat King Cole Songbook Vol.1 (Muse MR 5308)
DAVID MURRAY BIG BAND: Live at Sweet Basil Vol.1 (Black Saint BSR 0085)
FATS NAVARRO: The Fabulous Vol.1 (1947-49) (Blue Note BST 81531)
NEW AIR: Live at Montreal (Black Saint BSR 0084)
BERNARD PAGANOTTI: Paga (Craam CREAM 120)
OSCAR PETTIFORD: Blue Brothers (1960) (Black Lion BLP 30135)
SID PHILLIPS: Stardust (Halcyon HAL 20)
JEAN-LUC PONTY: Sonata Erotica (1972)

(Affinity AFF 133)
BUD POWELL: The Amazing Vol.1 (1949-51) (Blue Note BST 81503)
ENRICO RAVA: Rava String Band (Soul Note SN 1114)
REAL ALE & THUNDER BAND: At Vespers (Halcyon HAL 22)
DEWEY REDMAN: Red and Black in Williams (Black Saint BSR 0093)
GEORG RIEDEL: Kirblitz (Phonastic PHONT 7552)
HOWARD RILEY/KEITH TIPPETT: In Focus (Affinity AFF 137)
MAX ROACH: Survivors (Soul Note SN 1093)
SONNY ROLLINS: Vol.1 (1956) (Blue Note BST 81542)
CHARLIE ROUSE/BENNY BAILEY: Upper Manhattan Jazz Society (1981) (Enja ENJA 4090)
SAHEB SARBIK: It Couldn't Happen Without You (Soul Note SN 1098)
TONY SCOTT: Africain Bird Come Back (Soul Note SN 1093)
ARTIE SHAW: The Uncollected Vol.5 (1939-39) (Hindsight HUK 176)
ARCHIE SHEPP: Down Home in New York (Soul Note SN 1102)
WAYNE SHORTER: Ju-Ju (1964) (Blue Note BST 84182)
HORACE SILVER: Song for my Fether (1964) (Blue Note BST 84185)
—Live 1964 (Emerald EMR 1001)
ZOOT SIMS: In a Sentimental Mood (Sonet SNTF 932)
JIMMY SMITH: The Sermon (1957-58) (Blue Note BST 84011)
CHRISTOPH SPENDEL: Between the Moments (Cream CREAM 110)
IDREES SULEIMAN: Bird's Grass (Steeplechase SCS 1202)
BUDDY TATE: Jumpin' on the West Coast (1947) (Black Lion BLP 30128)
STANLEY TURRENTINE: Joyride (1965) (Blue Note BST 84201)
MCCOY TYNER: Expansione (1969) (Blue Note BST 84338)
VARIOUS (DAVIES/BLAKEY/HANCOCK/et al.): Best of Blue Note (1948-63) (Blue Note BST 84429)
VARIOUS (T-BONE WALKER/JIMMY REED/BO DIDDLEY/et al.): Blues Rock Avalanche (Filles) (Chess SXMD 4056)
VARIOUS (HAWKINS/YOUNG/LOCK/JAW DAVIS/et al.): Classic Trmors Vol.2 (1943-48) (Doctor Jazz ASLP 0080)
VARIOUS (BOB WILBER/et al.): Cotton Club S'Track (Griffin GEF 70280)
VARIOUS (ROLAND KIRK/DIZZY GILLESPIE/CLIFFORD BROWN/et al.): Jazz Club Vol.2 (1953-56) (Club JAB 7)
BEN WEBSTER: Duke's in Bed (1965) (Black Lion BLP 30137)
BOB WILBER/DICK WELLSTOOD: Duet (Parkwood PW 103)
TEDDY WILSON: Moonglow (Black Lion BLP 30133)
WORLD SAXOPHONE QUARTET: Live in Zurich (1981) (Black Saint BSR 0077)

Compiled by Brian Priestley

THE WRITE PLACE...



BIRD BUFF

Some ornithological corrections and comments:

P.31 Col.1: "...almost every Parker Savoy aide was issued in a box set..." — true enough, but they forgot take a six-line of "Marmaduke". These were later issued in *Encores*, Vol.2.

Col.2: "...there are two public versions on record (of 'Night in Tunisia')..." — there are three more (actually four: there is one on which Bird plays the lead but does not solo): 1) early 1948 at the Three Deuces (Prestige 24009 and OJC), 2) 1947 at Carnegie Hall (Roulette) and 3) 1952 at Carnegie Hall (Columbia, out of print) — these are all very fine and should not be overlooked.

Col.2: "My Little Suede Shoes" ... unavailable elsewhere (than on the Rockland recording). — "Suede Shoes" was recorded commercially for Verve (ref.p.34, col.1). There is also an excellent version (Boston, 1953) on Phoenix Jazz 10.

Col.2: "evidence is that he simply walked on stage and took control, with superb solos on ... 'Four Brothers', especially in the bridge." (Odd that he was not familiar with one of the most talked-about and listened-to records of the time. On top of that, the record was four years old!) And, the recording is from August 1951, not 1952.

P.34 Col.3: "Parker ... was very willing to co-operate when the idea (of recording with strings) was mooted." Norman Granz has said in more than one interview that Parker actually "bugged" him for a session with strings. (Ref.p.27, col.1).

Col.3: Just my opinion, but I find Carroll's arrangements superior to Lipman's.

P.38 Col.2: Record no. three (also p.18, col.2) was recorded on June 30, 1950, not in 1949, as the LP jacket states.

PP.29-30: Why couldn't Jeff Tempo have expressed himself with a pointed caption under the altered photo instead of ranting like a junior LeRoi Jones? He deserves to be slapped by Benjamin David Goodman himself. We in America have to learn about and appreciate your kings. Please respect ours.

Greg Murphy should seek out the March, 1975 issue of *Jazz Journal* and read Chris Sheridan's "Chasin' the Bird". I owe a lot to this article.

I like your magazine. Anybody doing a good job of covering Bird, Stockhausen, and Suso in a single issue is "okledeke" by me.

Sath G. Markow, Honolulu.

AND THIS WEEK'S NUMBER ONE IS...

Normally I find *The Wire* an enjoyable and helpful paper, but I'm really not sure that the trend to top-tennism of "Essential" (bold letters) Coltrane in issue 15 helps the music or the reader.

I assume that most *Wire* readers already

know their Coltrane, if only in a rudimentary fashion, and are therefore not really interested in somebody else's top ten. The uninitiated might have preferred a page of intelligent comment to illustration of jackets accompanied by five-line comments bearing such inclusive criticism as "has to be heard to be believed".

The tendency to catalogue and hierarchise is a great disservice to the world of music. I can only hope that a first-time Coltrane listener, having discovered that his playing is one of the Seven Steps to Jazz, is not dissuaded from buying *Live at the Village Vanguard* because it is not one of the essential top ten.

David Ayres, Southampton
Fair comment, David. I like looking at charts — which are fun if you don't take them too seriously — and cataloguing is often useful, not a "great disservice". But this sort of random favortism is pretty dubious — RC.

BARGAIN SCHMARGAIN

I still recall those halcyon days of a distant hot summer when *The Wire* buzzed at our doors with a first edition brimming with Mesalanic zeal to promote the all-important message that the most vital part of jazz and improvised music was the musician. Without his or her continuing creativity, we should all be gathered round an increasingly mortified corpse of a music whose glories lay in an ever more distant past (*Strehln! — Literary Ed.*)

However, like it or not, one matter above all ensures any musician's continuing creativity, and that is the economic means to support himself/herself and, where relevant, a family. No amount of kind or profoundly understanding words will buy bread. Ask J.J. Johnson why he worked for the U.S. Post Office — or Lee Konitz why he took up gardening. I therefore fail to see how protecting musicians' livelihoods can possibly be served by an article like "The Wire's Guide To Bargains" (March).

I think your readers should be informed that the labels drooled over so naively by the two intrepid contributors include the worst examples of piracy in the record industry. Judged even on technical terms alone, the product of some is relatively shoddy.

The "remarkable" Joker series is especially notable for careless transfers containing more wow, flutter, surface noise and other sound quality problems than any other label I have ever encountered. More to the point, I have never met any musician who has received a penny's (cent's?) royalties from such a source.

One thing these labels do have in common — with the exception of Charlie Parker Records, itself a label consistently undercut by less scrupulous operators — is that none has ever originated a recording by any jazz artists.

It is worth remembering that recordings are a useful source of "upfront" money for many

musicians, so consider the artist who has made a respectable deal with an honest company. He sits back awaiting royalties that never come because some comedian in another continent has illegally dubbed a copy, remastered it and sold it at a fraction of the price.

This aspect of bootlegging and piracy makes it the most direct and insidious form of exploitation of the artist possible. To applaud it so gleefully in the columns of a magazine apparently devoted to the promotion of the musician's interests is stunning.

Chris Sheridan, Berkhamstead.
I hardly think the product in question was gleefully drooled over. The piece made it reasonably clear that most of these issues were a cheap hotchpotch, useful only as gaffers — a point of information which the readership is entitled to. The Wire is not only "devoted to the promotion of the musician's interests" — it's devoted to listeners' interests as well. People want to know about this stuff. And — just to be contentious for a moment — who's to say that I Grand's Blue Serge (which a major company disgracefully declines to reissue) didn't assist sales of the legit reissue of Boston Blow-Up? — RC.

OLD BORES' CORNER

Graham Collier, smarting at poor notices in the *London Standard* and the *Sunday Times* for his poorly attended and coolly received concert on the opening night of Camden Jazz Week, is quick to denounce myself and Derek Jewell as having "lost all credibility among jazz musicians". Would he have said so, I wonder, if we had raved over it?

Taking a full page in this worthy journal to state his case — which seems to be that everything he does deserves more financial support and will only displease Thatcherites and four-to-the-bar fuddy duddies — only proves what I told him after the concert: there's no such thing as bad publicity.

As someone who earned his living as a musician for more than four years, I hardly need to be told that the economic recession is bad news for jazz musicians and just about everybody else. However, that has nothing to do with good music. The true creators of great jazz have all known times far harder than Collier is ever likely to experience, and none of them, from Jelly Roll Morton to John Coltrane, was ever in receipt of an Arts Council grant.

Of course everyone must do the best they can, but I suspect that what really worries Collier about those reviews is that if his access to public funds dries up, the actual public demand for his music might not even keep him in manuscript paper. And if that sounds like a lesson in Thatcherite economics, the point is that something really ought to be done to curb the spiralling inflation of Collier's ego.

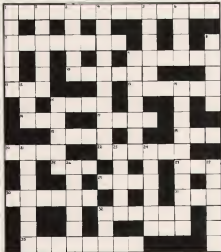
Jack Massani, London
"More than four years", eh? We await your working memoirs with eagerness, Jack — RC.



JAZZWORD

THE WIRE'S first crossword shouldn't provoke too many cross words among fanatics. Be warned: they get harder.

Your jazzword compiler is Professor **FRED DELLAR**.



ACROSS

- 1 Cleaner tone, Tom? Then twist to become a true original! (7,7)
- 7 Springfield's a capital place for this flying Jacques
- 9 Red trumpet star - real name Robert Chudnick
- 10 Don, suitably cherry coloured
- 11 Thai bass-playing Methewson
- 12 Sweets for Prince Harry?
- 15 I abel that led around
- 16 Tony rather than Seb
- 17 Horn man who was inside
- 18 Obviously not a poor drummer
- 19 and 21 down Way down yonder in the berthplace of jazz (3,7)
- 20 Nat or Cozy?
- 22 Jimmy sounds a little like a Chinese river, though he came from Chicago
- 25 Backward yak in the MUO
- 27 Just the vehicle for Mr Celloway
- 29 Unfettered jazz - as in Gutfre exercise
- 30 Randy pianist
- 31 Avant garde Rashed
- 32 Hamburg Hans? No, actually he's from Vienna
- 33 Frank reedman with Miles, Marne etc.

DOWN

- 1 and 2 Hardy seilor noted for his film and TV scores (5,5)
- 3 Just the instrument for Been
- 4 Chrp, yodel and convert to a musician whom Coltrane named as "One of the greatest people I've ever known" (4,6)
- 5 Don and Mai combine to form another Don
- 6 Herbie for all seasons?
- 8 Did pianist Jimmy play at Corner Houses?
- 9 Boyd men
- 12 In short - Original Jazz Classics (1,1,1) in 1963, aged 31 (5,5)
- 15 and 28 Not Buster, Benny nor Pearl but a U.K. guitarist (5,5)
- 21 See 19 across
- 23 Rate connected with Flore Punm
- 24 Love call favoured by Duke
- 26 Famous Harlem venue
- 28 See 15 down
- 32 Joy's other half

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